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POETICAL WORKS

of

ROBERT BRIDGES

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LIST OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS

PALICIO.

1. *PALICIO. A Romantic Drama in Five Acts in the Elizabethan manner.*

Ἦ καὶ ΠΑΛΙΚΩΝ εὐλόγως μενεῖ φάτις ;
Πάλιν γὰρ ἵκουσ' ἐκ σκότου τόδ' ἐς φάος.

Æsch., *Ætnæ, frag.*

Published by Ewd. Bumpus. London, 1890. 4*to.* *pp.* 37–70.

RETURN OF ULYSSES.

1. *THE RETURN OF ULYSSES. A Drama in Five Acts in a mixed manner.*

Ἃ μὲν ἐποποιία ἔχει, ὑπάρχει τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ·
ἃ δὲ αὐτή, οὐ πάντα ἐν τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ.

Arist., *Poet.* 12.

Published by Ewd. Bumpus. London, 1890. 4*to.* *pp.* 71–100.

PALICIO

A ROMANTIC
DRAMA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HUGO . . . . . *Viceroy of Sicily.*
LIVIO . . . *his son, lover of Margaret.*
MANUEL *Chief Justiciary, betrothed to Constance.*
PHILIP, Duke . . . *Spanish commissioner.*
FERDINAND . . . . . *his secretary.*
BLASCO . . . . . *a Sicilian count.*
MICHAEL ROSSO . *a surgeon, lover of Margaret.*
GIOVANNI PALICIO . . . *brigand.*
SQUARCIALUPU . . . . *his lieutenant.*

MARGARET . . . . *sister to Manuel.*
CONSTANCE . . . . *daughter to Hugo.*
LUCIA . . . . *servant to Margaret.*

Brigands, soldiers, messengers, servants.

The scene is in PALERMO, and sometimes in the hills above MONREALE.

Time, Spanish occupation of Sicily.

PALICIO

ACT I

SCENE 1

Palermo. Reception-room in the Palace.
BLASCO and FERDINAND.

BLASCO.

HAVE you not been in Sicily before?

FERDINAND.

Never.

Bl. And, sir, what think you of Palermo?
Have you as fine cities in Spain?

Fer. Your city,
Approached by sea or from the roofs surveyed,
Smiles back upon the gazer like a queen
That hears her praise. Nearer to speak I'll grudge not,
When I may nearer know: but since we came

There's been no hour a stranger might dare shew
His face in the streets.

Bl. The time is now unquiet.

Fer. Rather I'd say government given over
To murderous bandits, who range up and down
Unchecked: to whom the king's commissioners
Were just the daintiest pricking. If I may brag
Of home, our cities are more orderly.

Bl. 'Tis a hot-blooded race, sir, full of stirrings,
Subject to fermentation, and like good wine
Ever the better for it.

Fer. But can you tell me
The real cause of these disturbances?

Bl. Nothing is easier, sir. Your viceroy, Hugo,
This is the point, is plunged in disesteem.
He has lost the fear and won the hate of the people.
Already, ere ye came, the news ye bring
Of the king being dead, was buzzed. Since at his death
His viceroy's office falls to ground, our townsmen
Seize on this interval, wherein they hold
He hath no jurisdiction, to discredit him,
Kill him maybe, if nothing else will hinder
His reappointment. They but make the most
Of their occasion: that is all.

Fer. But how
Can a mere handful of such ruffians hold

The city, when the loyal troops are his?

Bl. 'Tis known to the people that their cause hath found
An ear in Spain: and here among the barons
Are many who wish well to the revolt.
Should Hugo push to extremes he might discover
Most potent enemies. Remember, sir,
'Twas a street scuffle in this very town,
That drave the French from Sicily.

Fer. The thought
Brings me no comfort.

Bl. Wherefore 'tis his policy
To meet the present rage by such concessions
As may be popular, and to give forth
The king is ill, not dead. 'Tis for this reason
No mass is sung nor mourning liveries worn:
To-night's festivity, such as it is,
Hath only this pretence.

Fer. Are the two ladies
His daughters both?

Bl. The taller and the fairer,
The lady Constance, is his only daughter.
Your fine duke Philip, who comes now from court
With such a mightiness, was once her lover.

Fer. That doth not single her.

Bl. But then it did.

She was his first. 'Twas when duke Philip's father
Was viceroy here; Hugo was then chief justice,
And Manuel, who succeeded him, was only
Young Philip's tutor;—he succeeds moreover
Now to his pupil's leavings, and will marry
The long-forgotten Constance.

Fer. 'Twas the other
I asked of, in white satin, she who sat
On Philip's right at supper; who is she?

Bl. That, sir, is Margaret.

Fer. And who is Margaret?

Bl. Sister to Manuel.

Fer. She far outshines
Her future sister.

Bl. They that can see have thought it:
And, sir, 'twill tax your better wit to add
A tittle to her full accustomed homage.
Your broken heart were but a pinch of pepper
Sprinkled on porridge. Now for full two years
Her reign hath made a melancholy madness
The fashion 'mongst our youth.

Fer. I should much like
To be presented.

Bl. O, sir, at your will.
Judge for yourself. See, here they come. (*Aside.*) A moth!

Fer. (*aside*). A very civil fellow.

[*They retire to back.*

Enter R. *Hugo, Philip, Manuel, Margaret, Constance and Livio.*

HUGO.

I am sorry, your grace,
We make so small a party. For our poor
Reception, and for all shortcomings else,
Accuse the occasion.

PHILIP.

I think, your excellence,
I cannot play the guest. This house was once
So long my home, that here I look to find
As little ceremony as I fear I have shewn.

Hu. So should it be. Make it your home again.

Ph. I shall forget I have ever been away.

MANUEL.

Five years.

Ph. Ay, but five years of wandering,
Such as can but endear one's home the more.
My memory still would serve me to walk blindfold
From any point of the city to these doors.

Man. What is your memory for our studies, Philip?

Ph. Too slippery for my profit. Yet the pleasure

Lives very brightly;—nay, I could but name
One deprivation I have more regretted.

MARGARET.

But now
My brother has a new philosophy.

Ph. Ah! If you share the secret, and I be thought
Worthy of initiation, may I hear it?

Mar. And welcome. Manuel, in his deep research
For the first cause and harmony of things,
Hit upon both together—they are one:
'Tis love. And now, since I profess it not,
And since 'twas learnt of you . . .

Man. (*to Mar.*). Hush, sister, hush!

Ph. I am very proud of such a pupil. (*Aside.*)
Since
He has learned my love so readily, it may be
That he may catch my jealousy—

Hu. Come, duke,
Sit here by me. There's more to talk of. Livio,
Fetch us the papers.

Philip crosses to L. *and sits by Hugo.*

Man. (*crossing to* R.). They must grant us, Constance,
A moment now. All day I have been away,
And yesterday I saw you not at all.

Can you forgive a lover so remiss?

CONSTANCE.

I fear I half deserve your fear.

Man. The time
Can be but short, but it shall make amends.

[*They talk together.*

Bl. (*coming forward with Fer.*). Fair lady Margaret,
Count Ferdinand of Vergas; I present him
At his desire.

Fer. Your ladyship's true servant.

Mar. I am much honoured.

Fer. Lady, 'tis worth the pains
To cross from Spain to see you.

Mar. From that I guess
That you are a better sailor than the duke.

Fer. Nay, you judge wrong.

Mar. Have you then ate no dinner?

Fer. Now if I had not, I'd blame your stormy town
Before the sea for that: since we left ship
We are cabined in this house; to pass the door
Were to leap overboard in a whole gale.

Mar. I fear this is no country for you, sir,
If noises in the street keep you indoors.

LIVIO.

Take warning, count; Sicily's fairest rose

Blooms on an angry plant.

Mar. But we can boast
Of warriors that for fragrance shame the rose.
(*To Liv.*) Is't musk to-day?

Liv. (*to Fer.*). I told you.

Enter Messenger R., *crosses to Hugo* L.

MESSENGER.

This paper, sire, is posted thro' the town.

Hu. Eh, eh! what have we here? [*Reads.*

Citizens of Palermo, King Pedro is dead. God rest his soul! The office of Viceroy being vacant, the Parliament of townsmen, assembled in the church of San Lorenzo, have this day elected Manuel to be your viceroy, in place of Hugo. Death to Hugo! Long live the king!

Why, Manuel, what's this parliament?

Man. I know
No more than doth your excellence. But 'tis plain
That they are orderers who put on a dress
Of regular authority; they use
The senatorial voice, and over all
They have now usurped my name to have it thought
That I have set their hatch.

[*Shouts without of "Death to Hugo! The Despatches!"*]

Ph. Here comes the parliament.

Hu. Now this is what I feared. Manuel, I pray you,
Go to the balcony, you have their ear;
Use then your credit.
Man. What, sire, shall I say?
Hu. Well, you should know.
Liv. (*to Man.*). Look, if they ask to hear
The last despatches, gull them with some paper;
Which while you show, you make as if therefrom
You read the king's not dead.
Ph. (*to Liv.*). Nay, Livio:
The word is wanted for a troop of horse.
My father never would have brooked this insult
From such a mob.
Liv. Our soldiers are not idle.
They laid hands yesterday upon the chief
And head of all, one John Palicio.
We have certain information that the rebels
Cannot be kept together but by him.
Hark! they are quiet now.
Hu. (*to Man. returning*). What is your charm
To win such meek obedience?
Man. They're gone, your excellence;
But not from aught I said: for ere I spoke
Some rumour reached them, and the skirt of the throng,
That far beyond my hearing stood apart

In scattered groups, broke hastily away:
Then the next ranks shed off, and then the next
Loosened and followed them: till the voice came
To the very midst and huddle, where they pressed
With upturned faces; then all heads went down,
And with a cry they fled.

Hu. Whither?

Man. I think
To the prison, my lord.

Enter a Soldier.

Hu. What now? give me thy matter.

SOLDIER.

The prisoner Palicio is escaped.
He killed his guards, and fled beyond pursuit.

Ph. (*to Liv.*). Why, is not this the man you spoke of?

Liv. Ay,
That is the man.

Hu. Let the patrol be doubled for the night,
And give not o'er the search. Alive or dead,
A hundred florins to whoever finds him.
Blasco, go see to it: he must not escape.

Bl. (*aside*). But if he be escaped, who's viceroy then?

[*Exit with soldier.*

Hu. This same Palicio, duke, is the chief rebel:
While he was caged, I could despise the rest.

But he's a dangerous fellow; bred in the hills,
He is yet of noble blood and high descent:
A proud and lofty temper, that hath taken
A graft of wildness, and shot forth afresh
In base luxuriance. Tho' yet unbearded,
Bandits and exiles own him; and the people,
Who hold such men in honour, can be drawn
But by his name to any enterprise.
'Tis he that with his bread-tax cry hath stirred
The commons to rebel, and be he 'scaped
Clear, as 'tis thought, there will be more ado.
I'll not so much as vouch, duke, for your safety,
If you should sleep in the palace.
Man. Let the duke
Come to my house. What say you?
Hu. What say you, Philip?
They would not seek you there.
Ph. If 'tis your wish.
I would not bring you trouble. (*To Fer.*) Ferdinand,
These papers must be copied: take them straight
Into your chamber. [*Exit Ferdinand.*
Hu. 'Tis but truth, your grace,
We may be driven hence. The people's cry
Is *Sack and fire the palace.*
Mar. See if Livio
Have not gone pale! Now, Livio, if you think

'Tis safer at our house, for pity's sake
Spare your complexion and come back with us.
Liv. No doubt that sleep were sweeter, and all things else
Beneath thy roof, lady: and came there danger,
That my sword might protect thee . . .
Mar. The heavens shield us,
When we be left to that.
Liv. Didst thou not treat
All men with like contempt, I were much wronged:
But there's none thou wilt praise.
Mar. Now, if I needed
A man to look at, I would pass my time
Searching for this Palicio. As for you,
When you can lead the people, and cut your way
Thro' guards and prison walls, and get a price
Set on your head . . . I'll marry you.
Man. Come, sister,
This goes too far.
Mar. Why, no. Be generous.
If I be wrong, what makes you ill at ease
When this man's free? Palicio is in prison,
And all goes cheerfully; you sit to feast,
You have no care, a joke will raise a laugh.
Palicio is escaped—hey! at that news
What blackness reigns! Forgive me, friends; I see

This man's your master, and I like him for it.
Bravery I love, and there's no cause so poor
It cannot justify.
Hu. If we should take him,
I'll send him to you stuffed.
Mar. Is that a speech
One should forgive?
Man. Enough. We take our leave.
We pass by a private way, duke.
Ph. I come with you.
Good-night.
All. Good-night.
[*Exeunt Philip, Manuel, and Margaret.*
Hu. (*to Con.*). And you to bed.
Con. I pray there's nought to fear?
Hu. Nay, nay. Good-night, child; sleep you sound.
Con. Dear father,
Heaven keep you safe. Good-night.
Hu. Fear not for me.
[*Exit Constance.*
Hark, Livio.
I have learned somewhat from Philip: the Spanish court
Is open to my enemies. My best hope
If things go worse will be to sail for Spain
And face them boldly there. 'Tis an extremity

'Twere best to avoid: but since my hands are tied
I may be forced; and am so far resolved,
That if Palicio now should raise the town,
And come to attack the palace, I shall fly.
I have had a way cut thro' the chapel wall,
Whence by a covered passage I can reach
The harbour, where I keep a ship prepared.
Thee I must leave. But let this news be spread,
That Philip is with Manuel; it may serve
To draw the people thither—his being here
Would have impeded my escape. And first
We'll go the rounds, and see that at all points
The watch is strong and wakeful. Come with me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 2

Hall in Manuel's house. Enter PALICIO in woman's clothes, bleeding, a dagger in his hand.

PALICIO.

No one, no sound. Can I hide here I am safe.
I have given the curs the slip, if I can hide.
Safe . . . But this wound, the blood runs like a river:
Unless they track me by it I am clear—so far.

A paltry stab. I'll bind it round and tie it
To stop the blood—so, so. Now, where to hide?
For here is no protection; 'tis the house
Of the chief justiciary . . . a doubtful 'scape
From prison here. Yet when I saw the wall
'Twas home; then, oh, my God! this flip-flap gear
Shackling my knees—Over! ha, ha! the fools
Will never guess that leap. But I must hide:
Slip out ere morn: or if not that, be bold,
Give myself up to Manuel. Is that hope?
Manuel the just. 'Twere best reserve that hope
Till others fail. Hark!—steps. Where can I get?
Behind this curtain—so. [*Hides.*

Enter Manuel, Philip, Margaret, and Servant.

MANUEL (*to servt.*).

Giuseppe, show the duke my room.
(*To Ph.*) Taking us unawares o'erlook, I pray,
The want of ceremony. You will find all comfort
For sleep or wakefulness.

PHILIP.

This is the flower
Of hospitality. Now, for old sakes,
I'd beg some meaner shift, to prove me mindful
Of ancient benefits.

MARGARET.

O, be content:
My brother's luxury will not o'erwhelm you
With obligation.

Man. Rest you well. Good-night!

Mar. and Ph. Good-night!

[*Exit Philip with servant.*

Man. Margaret!

Mar. My brother!

Man. You did ill to-night.

Mar. Forgive me. I said in jest you had learned your love
From Philip. I was sorry.

Man. Nay, what's that? 269
Yet 'twas ill said, and may have wounded Philip;
Though he must wish us to assume there's nothing
'Twixt him and Constance: and now he's our guest
We must not let our courtesy be tainted
By his own lightness; nay, the tales told of him
Are nought to us. He's of a generous nature,
And not forbidding to what faults beset
His age and rank. But we make no man better
By lower estimation; an open kindliness
And trust may help him; let us use such toward him.

Mar. I will. But then what was't I said?

Man. Ah! Why,

Your praise of John Palicio. See you not
'Twill injure me with Hugo? Our relations
Are tried by public matters: 'tis in the scope
Of private intercourse to ease the strain,
Or force the rupture.

Mar. Brother, I am very sorry.
I thought . . .

Man. I do not blame your thought. I grant
These Spaniards are bad masters. First they wrecked
This island to possess it; then the prize,
Which kindness might have much enriched, is stripped
Even to the bone by cruelty and rapine.
Their viceroy too, this Hugo—a man who governs
But to be governor, and even at that
Fails like a fool. To see the folk misruled
More grieves me than to see the folk misled.
And if they have much cause to rise, there's none
Hath more to lead them, than the native outlaw,
Whom you so praised.

Re-enter Servant.

Mar. Then you forgive me, brother?

Man. Well, well, good-night!

Mar. Good-night! [*Exit.*

Man. Giuseppe, prepare
The little room at the end of the corridor;

I will sleep there. I shall not want thee more.
[*Exit servant.*
It matters not what happens, day by day
The rupture grows. 'Tis plain Hugo and I
Are foes at heart—and what a pitiful trick
To put the question of my marriage by,
Withholding his consent just for the thought,
That while my happiness hangs on his nod,
I must be closer bound to serve his interest,
Now, when his credit totters. Doth he not know
That honourable minds, thro' very fear
Of their self-interest, are thrust away
Beyond their counter-judgment? Nay, 'tis clear
He falls, he falls; and were 't not now for Constance,
I'd gladly see him fall.

Palicio comes forward.

A woman here!
Why, who art thou?
Pal. Hush, hush! I am no woman.
[*Lays his dagger on the table.*
Draw not your sword. See here my dagger.
Man. Ha!
And bloodied freshly.
Pal. Let me bar the door. [*Goes to door.*
Man. Why, can it be?—

Pal. I am Palicio.
Man. Thou here!
Pal. You see.
Man. From prison?
Pal. Escaped, thank God!
I skirmished with my guards, and being pursued
Came thro' your orange garden. Here none will seek me.
Hide me!
Man. Thee, madman, here?
Pal. Ay, call me madman.
I am mad, and praise God for it . . if to hate tyrants
Be madness, I'm past cure: or if 'tis madness
To escape from prison . . .
Man. Nay, neither. I blamed thee not
In these; but that thou thinkest to overbear
The troops of Spain with thy small brigand crew:
To escape from justice flying to my house,—
The chief justiciary.
Pal. What will you do?
Man. Return thee straight to prison.
Pal. First, I beseech you,
Help me to bind my wound.
Man. Art thou much hurt?
Pal. A thrust in the arm, a petty prick, which yet
Bleeds uncontrolledly.

Man. Undo it. It spurts.
Hold here thy hand, while with thy handkerchief
I bind thy arm.

Pal. Look you, 'tis lower down.

Man. Peace, man! 'Twill stay the blood to bind thee here.
Hast thou no other hurt?

Pal. Nay, none but this.
And see, 'tis staunched already. I must thank you,
Tho' here your help should end. Call in the hirelings;
They'll not be far. I will go back with them.
And yet 'twere pity; for 'tis certain death:
I have killed three of them. Manuel, I pray you—
I pray you, Manuel, crush not all my hopes,
My just cause. Give me a sword and a man's dress,
And let me forth to try my fortune!

Man. Nay.

Pal. Then if I take my dagger and venture out . . [*Takes it.*
I'll yet escape. Deny me not this chance.
See, I'll not ask your leave, but only go. [*Going.*

Man. Giovanni, stay. Thou hast done me a great wrong
In flying here. Why didst thou choose my house?

Pal. 'Twas as I fled for life: the hue-and-cry
Came gathering faster round me: being still clear,

And seeing your wall, it seemed my safety lay
In that leap, could I make it.
Man. Thou'rt the last,
And only offspring of a noble stock.
The blood that I have staunchèd in thy veins,
Sprang from the heart of Sicily, and flows
Redder than mine, tho' mine too once was mixed,
And not unworthily, with thine, and now
From my great grandsire's marriage both our bloods
Are even as one, and thy blood on my hands
Is mine, and mine within my veins is thine.
I cannot send thee to thy death, Giovanni;
I may not shelter thee from justice: See,
Thou hast done me a grievous wrong.
Pal. Yet hide me awhile.
This house may be my prison.
Man. Thou hast this hope:
The king being dead . . .
Pal. Is't true that Pedro is dead?
Man. Ay, true enough.
Pal. Then are you free. I am safe.
[*Puts dagger in his bosom.*
Man. I say this is thy hope. The king being dead,
Such offices as hold under the crown
Need confirmation. Now I do not say
Allegiance lapses; but, if I be quick

To guess the new king's will, that he will change
Our viceroy—which I doubt not,—I may be bold
Now to withhold my duties from a servant
Discredited, contending that they hang
Upon my judgment, for my deeds to give
After-account. See, 'tis a subtle point
I strain for thee, rather than hurt the claim
Of kinship. Thou shalt be my prisoner
For these few days. By chance I have a room
Fit for thy lodging: there I'll shew thee now,
And thence thou must not stir. I'll bring thee food,
Look to thy wants, and try to cure thy wound.
Thou on thy part must lie as still as one
That hushes for his life. What, man; thou'rt faint
For loss of blood, and strain? Cannot you stand?
Stand up, or I must carry you. Indeed,
Carry him I must . . see, now, where be my keys?

[*Going, carrying Palicio.*

ACT · II

SCENE · 1

Hall in Manuel's house. MARGARET and CONSTANCE.

MARGARET.

SWEET, happy Constance, tell me why thou sighest.
What can'st thou lack?

CONSTANCE.

I am not very happy.

Mar. Not happy, thou? Woe for the world!
I thought
Love was God's perfect recipe, to drowse
All mortal stings. Yet sainted marriage hath
One threat—the loss of liberty: is't that?
It well may fright. To have been a girl with me
So long, and make at last the outrageous stroke,
And live as do our aunts! Were't not my brother,
I'd kill the man.

Con. Margaret!

Mar. Well mayst thou sigh:
I can sigh for thee.
Con. I should love to hear thee.
Thou owest me sighs, for mine were thoughts of thee.
Mar. Because I love not? Hast thou forgot already
Life may be tolerable for a woman
Without thy joy?
Con. You treat poor Livio
Unkindly, Margaret.
Mar. Now, if that's the grief,
We have threshed it out before.
Con. I shall not spare you,
Till you are kinder.
Mar. Yet if I were kinder,
And he should build a hope upon that kindness,
Until it proved unkinder than unkindness?
Con. He loves you well.
Mar. No better than the others;
Than Ventimiglia loves, or Chiaramonte,
Good Michael Rosso, or the impudent Blasco,
Or my new courtier Ferdinand.
Con. He loves
With all his heart. Life is as tedious to him
As to the dark and dusty wheel, which jerks
Behind the dial-face, until he see you;
When for his joy you give him but disdain.

Mar. Thou didst not tell him thou wouldst speak for him?

Con. Why not?

Mar. Now I, Constance, have something fresh: A mystery.

Con. A mystery?

Mar. Yes, a mystery. Guess what it is.

Con. How should I guess?

Mar. Indeed, Guessing would never wind it.

Con. Then, prithee, tell me.

Mar. I died to tell thee ere thou camest, and now I grudge it sadly. Yet, for the fresh mount 'Twill give thy thoughts, I'll tell. 'Twas yesternight, Just on the stroke of one . . .

Con. 'Tis not a ghost?

Mar. If after all 'twere but a ghost!

Con. Come, tell me.

Mar. Thou wilt not breathe a word?

Con. No, not a word.

Mar. Thou know'st the casement of my bedroom looks Across the court. There as I stood last night, Watching the moon awhile, ere I shut out The sleepless splendour from my dreams, I heard

A heavy step pass down the gallery.
'Tis Manuel, I thought, who goes to lie
In the little chamber at the back,—for Philip
Had his;—but, for some strangeness in the step
Pricked my attention, and to content my thought,
I lent my ear to the sound, until it reached
The door at the end: there, standing by the window
I saw him plain: 'twas he, but in his arms
A woman, fainting as I thought, or dead.
Her arms hung loose, and o'er his shoulder thrown
Her head fell back.

Con. A woman! art thou sure?

Mar. He could not carry a ghost. Besides, this morning
I watched him: he took thither meat and drink,
And locked the door, and strictly bade the servants
They should not enter.

Con. Hast thou questioned him?

Mar. I have not so much as let him speak with me.
He might forbid me: and, O my curiosity,
I must know more.

Con. What dost thou think to learn?

Mar. I have neither guess nor hope; I lay awake
An hour, and thought of fifty things, not one
Of any likelihood. In all romance
No lady in distress ere came at midnight

To the house of the chief justice. I could wish
This beauteous maiden were a young princess
Fled o'er the seas disguised.

Con. Then thou couldst see
What she was like.

Mar. Why, no,—how could I see?
I only saw that she was dark.

Con. Thou saidst
That she was beautiful.

Mar. Of course she is young
And beautiful. Why,—you are not jealous, Constance?

Con. Not jealous, no.

Mar. And the only pity of it
Is that she'll prove in the end a poor relation
Fall'n to our care, or some more hapless girl
Left on the doorstep dying.

Con. In such case,
What were the need of secrecy?

Mar. I wish
I had never told thee aught. Why shouldst thou fancy
Impossibilities?

Con. What is impossible?

Mar. I fear now that the sight of thy old love,
Philip the false, hath turned thy happier trust.
Thou'rt changed.

Con. Nay, nay: I am not: and yet 'tis true

His coming is my trouble. [*Weeps.*

Mar. Forgive me, sweetest.

Con. Margaret, you know I have none at all but you
To unfold my heart to: only you can tell
What I must feel at his return: you know
How far I loved, how much I was deceived.
His oaths of faith you heard from me, and shared
The joy of my delusion: and at last,
When he deserted me, you made your heart
The prison of my sorrows: you exhorted,—
O, you advised me well,—Be sure, you said,
Love that so breaks cannot be trusted more.
You bade me cast it off like an ill dream.
You found what life he led: how he profaned
His honourable passion in the play
Of errant gallantries. All that sad time
I leaned on you, and 'twas your friendship gave
The occasions whence my love with Manuel sprung.
You led me still, you gave me confidence;
Your comfort turned to joy, Manuel was mine.
When suddenly on some mysterious cause
He holds aloof: my joy is bid await.
O, Margaret, if you understood love's joy,
How closely 'tis inwoven with fear to lose,
You would not wonder that I tremble, seeing
This shadow blot my sunshine, that my fear

Discolours every circumstance. To me
The common course of things on which men count
Is the only miracle, all chances else
As they are feared are likely. O, do not blame me.
Philip is like an evil spirit beside me
That stands to smile on what I dread to think.

Mar. Philip being false can give no cause to doubt
Of Manuel's faith.

Con. I doubt him not: and yet
If I speak of my brother you only laugh,
But if you speak of yours . . .

Mar. Round, round again.
Betwixt our brothers grant some difference.
Thy Livio is a boy of slender parts,
Led by his passions. Manuel is a man
Austere and stern; he is above suspicion.

Con. I do not doubt his truth, but find such sternness
Unkind to love. My brother's love for you
Is simple: Manuel's love hath some reserve;
A veil, behind which, since I have never seen,
I have dreamed or feared a terror lay: ofttimes
When I have been with him, a pleasant hour
Has ended suddenly, as if his spirit
Was angered, and withdrew: then in his eyes
Is nothing left but barren contemplation,
To which I am an object as another;

Until he sighs, as conscious of the change.
The disappointment of our marriage brings
Scarce a regret to him: I heard him speak
Late to my father of it, as 'twere a thing
He held indifferently. There is some secret
Which I would know: maybe this is a clue.
Mar. What is the clue?
Con. This lady.
Mar. O, thou'rt sick.
But I can cure thee, wilt thou do my bidding.
Con. What would you bid?
Mar. Give rein to jealousy,
Ay, spur it on to falling. Fear the worst,
Believe the worst. Thou shalt suspect my brother;
He trifles, loves this lady: choose your tale:
Thou wilt not doubt again.
Con. I do not doubt him.
Nay, I will bid him tell me all.
Mar. And so
Betray thy doubt to him. Be wiser, madam!
Look to thy cure: indulge thy jealousy:
To which end I encourage it. Indeed,
I am come to think there's cause, and thy suspicion
Hath much enhanced my mystery. Go thou home:
There make thyself unhappy. I meanwhile
Will root this out, and since I am housekeeper

I can go where I will.

Con. I pray thee, Margaret . . .

Mar. I must be jealous where my brother is wronged.
Thou art the accuser, and the evidence
Tells now for thee: 'tis my part to acquit us.
Hinder me not.

Con. When wilt thou know?

Mar. Maybe
'Tis as thou fearest.

Con. Wilt thou mock me so?

Mar. I bid thee go. Be sure I'll come to thee,
Or send thee word.

Con. But when?

Mar. I make no promise.
I cannot pity thee, and till thou goest
I can do nothing.

Con. Promise me to send.

Mar. I have promised that. Farewell!

Con. To-day?

Mar. To-day.
Trust me, I go at once. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 2

Room in the Palace. Enter BLASCO.

BLASCO.

I have sucked this Ferdinand. Duke Philip bears
Secret despatches sealed, not to be broken
Save on emergency; from which I gather
That if emergency arise, this Philip
Will be our viceroy. Palicio being escaped
Must make the emergency.—Then, where am I?
Packed off to Spain with Hugo's broken service,
To answer his impeachment. 'Tis high time
I cast by these old friends, such as they are,
And turn my face to the rising sun, this Philip.
I see the way too. Manuel's love for Constance
Hath roused again his former love for her
To a burning jealousy; if I feed that
I win his ear, and make my foe his foe.
As for Palicio, should he hold back
I have a way with him, and can contrive
He shall seize Hugo, or himself be seized,
As may suit best. The mischief set on foot,
Philip must break his seals; and I come in
With him as friendly to the people's rights,

And trusted servant of the crown. By heav'n,
I shall deserve their credit. See, here he comes.

Enter Philip.

Good morrow to your grace.

PHILIP.

Good morrow, Blasco.

Bl. I served thy father well.

Ph. I know it, Blasco.

What of it now?

Bl. I do not urge my service
Looking for recompense; I do not ask
So much as that your grace remember me
At court, to mention my forgotten name
In the new king's ear; as, When I was in Sicily
I saw old Blasco; nay, 'twas for good-will
I served, and now 'tis that I want a master
Which bids me speak. If but your grace could find me
Employment worth my wits, I would serve well.

Ph. I'll think of it.

Bl. Let your grace know my life
Spent in this court should make my loyalty
More than a counsellor. In this rebellion
I know where Hugo fails, where Manuel leans;
Could blow upon the flame or snuff it out,
Could bring you to the leaders.

Ph. Honest Blasco,
Thou know'st the world.
Bl. I know that one who comes
To make peace in a quarrel that he knows not,
Needs other knowledge than he is like to get
From either party. The strings of policy
Are coiled in private chambers; if your grace
Would pull at these . . .
Ph. True. If thou serve me thus
I'll take instruction.
Bl. Let your grace now prove me
In any question.
Ph. This, then. We in Spain
Supposed that your revolt stood on two legs,
Over-taxation and the hate of Hugo;
And had its claim for justice countenanced
By Manuel's voice: but coming here, I find
That he and Hugo's daughter are betrothed.
Now here's a private matter, which, I take it,
Involves the public. Say, doth Manuel play
His policy on Hugo, or hath Hugo
Trumped up a match with Manuel to support
His failing credit?
Bl. They are not betrothed, your grace.
What passes between lovers is unknown:
But this is sure, Hugo withholds consent,

And doth so to win Manuel to his side.
Ph. Doth not that win him?
Bl. Nay.
Ph. Then I conclude
He loves not.
Bl. Nay, indeed; it gives me pain
To witness his indifference; for the lady
Deserves the best.
Ph. Stay, count. Remember
In what has passed that word may well blame me.
Bl. I hearken not to idle tales. Your grace
May be punctilious; but in Manuel's instance
There's no excuse.
Ph. I care not what men say.
And now it hurts me more to hear thee blame
Another for the fault I stumbled in,
Than if 'twas said of me. I need thy knowledge.
Look, thou canst serve me; and I let none serve
For nothing. Take my purse (*gives it*); thou mayst have need
To spend so much for me.
Bl. I thank your grace.
I shun no obligation, and I am poor.
Ph. True, all men are so. Come now to my chamber,
Where we may talk in private.
Bl. (*aside*). 'Tis well begun.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 3

A room in Manuel's house. PALICIO reclining on a long chair half-dressed. Daylight nearly excluded: one candle burns.

PALICIO.

I seem to have lived a life in these few days;
To have died, and waked in no less strange a place,
Than where I think departed spirits will fly
In doom of death and unendurable silence
After their day of doing. Oh! 'tis strange
What just the shedding a few drops of blood
Will bring about—to loosen a handkerchief,
And on her undiscoverable journey
The soul sets forth. Nay, but to bleed so far
As I have done, breeds fancies much akin
To death; else would my spirit more revolt
'Gainst this enforcèd quiet and idleness:
This blocking of my life just on the stir
And hurry of hope, when all my operations
Pressed to success. I am surely very weak,
That I can lie and fret not, when I hear
The distant cries, passing from street to street,

Which tell how prompt and ripe my people were
For this their lost occasion. (*Knocking heard.*) Some one knocks.
Nay, the key turns. 'Tis Manuel.

MARGARET (*at door*).

May I come in?

Pal. (*aside*). Ah! who is this? Who's there?
[*Covering himself.*

Mar. (*entering*). 'Tis only I,
Manuël's sister. I have come to see
If I can do you any service, lady.

Pal. He did not send you?

Mar. Nay, but I may hope
I shall not seem to intrude, thus waiting on you.

Pal. (*aside*). What's to be done?

Mar. The room is dark. I fear you are ill.

Pal. I am hurt and must not stir.

Mar. Then lying here
In pain you must want help and company.
'Tis well I came. May I draw back the curtains?

Pal. Nay, there was reason, madam, why your brother
Shut door and window: I have enemies.

Mar. Alas, alas!
I can shew equal care. First to relock the door.

(*Aside, going to door.*) She is a lady.

Pal. (*aside*). 'Tis the famous Margaret.

Mar. Now let me light these candles.

[*Stage brightens.*

Pal. (*aside*). Surely in God's paradise, that rest of souls,
His angels and pure spirits look and speak
And move like this. O wonder! Wherefore comes she?
And how to keep her but a moment longer
From the discovery? and how to tell her?

Mar. Now while I sit. [*Finds gown on the chair.*
.. Why, oh! 'tis drenched with blood,
Your gown. Are you so hurt?

Pal. A sword-thrust, lady.

Mar. A sword-thrust. Ah!

Pal. Thou camest unadvised,
Lady: I wore the gown; if that deceived thee.
Yet 'twas but a disguise to save my life.
I am Palicio.

Mar. Sir!

Pal. Escaped from prison
And my pursuers hither. Thy brother's kindness
Hides me from death awhile.

Mar. I pray thy pardon.
'Twas not mere idle curiosity

That made my fault; but made I'll mend it, sir,
As soon as may be. [*Going.*

Pal. (*springing up*). Stay, nay, put down that key.
I bid thee stay. Thou hast forced my secret. Hear
The whole, and when thou hast heard I shall not fear
The unlocking of thy lips.

Mar. Why, sir, the thing
My brother means to hide is hidden to me.

Pal. 'Tis not alone my life . . .

Mar. Ah! see the blood is trickling down thy hand!

Pal. Pest! it hath started freshly.

Mar. Cannot I help thee?

Pal. Ay, 'tis the bandage on this arm.

Mar. To tie it?

Pal. My moving hath displaced it.

Mar. See, alas!
The ill I have done. Sit, I will bind it for thee.

Pal. Myself I cannot.

Mar. Nay. Tell thou me how.

Pal. Here, round this pad. As tightly as thou wilt.
Nay, tighter yet.

Mar. Shall I not harm thee?

Pal. Tighter.

Mar. I cannot pull it tighter.

Pal. Knot it so.
'Twill do: the blood hath ceased.

Mar. Oh, I am glad.
Do not thou stir: see, now, to wash thine arm,
I'll bring thee water. [*Goes for it.*
Pal. (*aside*). By heaven, where have I lived,
Like a wild beast beneath the open skies,
In dens and caves, and never known the taste
Of this soft ravishment? The rich of the earth
Are right: their bars and bolts are wisely wrought,
Having such treasure in their closed chambers.
Mar. Here 'tis. Reach forth thine arm.
Pal. Nay, give 't to me.
Stain not thy hands.
Mar. I pray thee.
Pal. As thou wilt.
Mar. How did it happen?
Pal. Wouldst thou hear it?
Mar. Tell me.
Pal. I had been two days in prison . . .
Mar. Tell me, first,
How could they catch thee?
Pal. Treachery: I was taken
By Hugo's soldiers as I knelt at mass.
Three stole behind me, seized me by the arms,
And dragged me forth. I knew I was betrayed;
I had entered but that morning in the town;
I was not known to them, nor did the hirelings

Look on my face. They led me straight to prison,
Thrust me in a cell so dank and dark and small,
That to be built alive into the grave
Were not more horrible.

Mar. Hugo would have killed thee.

Pal. Or let me starve; or else some gentle mercy;
Gouged my live eyeballs out, or lopped my hands.

Mar. How couldst thou 'scape?

Pal. Now thou wilt see our people
Have their account. The second night my gaoler
Brought in a woman with a deed to sign.
I knew my hope, and to her feigned reproach
Answered in anger back: but when she bade
I took the deed, and felt beneath the paper
A dagger's edge. That was my key to heaven,
Could I strike silently. To make occasion,
I thrust her from me with an oath: she fell,
As well she knew, against the foe, who stooping,
Stooped to his death and fell without a groan.
Then quick she doffed her gown for my disguise,
Telling me in few words how this was planned
By friends who had seen me taken: they had not means
For present rescue, but discovering soon
Who had betrayed me, used his cursed name
With the governour of the prison, to admit
Her, his pretended wife, that she might claim

Settlement of some debt before I died.
So was it paid. Then we went forth together,
I in her woman's garments, following her,
Who wore the habit of the soldier slain:
And she went clear: but I, for some suspicion
Was questioned at the gate. Of those two men,
One I slew straight: the other, as I struck,
Thrust thro' my arm, yet not so hurtfully
But that he fell for it too. But thence alarm
Was given: I fled pursued, and gat me clear,
Leaping your garden wall.

Mar. Who was the woman?

Pal. One of our people.

Mar. May her name be told?

Pal. I never heard it.

Mar. Yet she knew thee well.
I had been proud to have done her deed. I think
There are not many men as brave as she.

Pal. O, lady, there are many, women and men,
Sworn to risk life in our good cause.

Mar. Alas,
That such fine courage should be so misled!

Pal. Misled? how, if I lead it?

Mar. I had forgot.
Pardon me, sir. It was my brother's word.

Pal. Ay, 'tis his word. And yet I honour Manuel.

Were 't not for him there scarce would be a man
Of all our people who would reverence
Justice and order, and those other names
Of social welfare. 'Tis to him alone
We have looked to give us these. But if he stand
Where he can take our tyrants by the arm
And show them baits of righteousness, and lead them
Where they should go, shall we who lie beneath
Forbear to sting the laggard heel of justice,
Or think it crime to obstruct the path of wrong?
I blame not him that from his higher place
He finds offence in outcry and disorder:
To such as without loss or shame outride
The storms of shifting fortune this is easy.

Mar. What dost thou but exasperate ill-will?

Pal. Already our bread has been untaxed two days.

Mar. And may be two days more.

Pal. I have better hope,
Or had: for if I had once provoked the Spaniard
To set his troops against us, all the nobles,
Who now retired hold neutral parliament,
Would then have joined the people, and compelled
The justice of our claim by force of arms.

Mar. All, say'st thou?

Pal. All save one or two, who are bought
With Hugo's money.

Mar. Say'st thou bought?
Pal. O lady,
Unto their great dishonour they are bought,
With sweated pence wrung from the labourer,
Ere he can buy a loaf to feed his children
Out of the corn his hands have sown and reaped.
Is not this shame?
Mar. 'Tis shame.
Pal. And shall Palicio
See this thing done, because he hath not office,
Or those few paltry florins, which might turn
The scale for poor Sicilians?
Mar. Ah, indeed,
I knew, I felt that thou wert right; and now
I see it: I never blamed thee.
Pal. No, nor Manuel
Blames me at heart, tho' he forbid my means.
Think, had I kept my old estate, and he
Had fallen as I, should I not do as he,
And he as I am doing?
Mar. Oh, I think
'Tis nobler to be poor. To share the suffering
Of them we pity ranks above redress
I am come to envy thee.
Pal. And certain it is,
They who have least to lose will venture most.

Mar. Yet those that have can give. What's the best hope
Of this rebellion?
Pal. We would make thy brother
Viceroy in place of Hugo.
Mar. Will that be?
Pal. Here I know nothing, save that nought is done.
Mar. Is there no leader then but thee?
Pal. The people
Are limbs without a head.
Mar. When will thy wound
Be healed?
Pal. Thy brother says that any surgeon
Could mend it quickly, but that his own skill,
Which knows the injury, was never practised
To find out and to bind the wounded vessel,
Which, being unhelped of art, may run to death.
Mar. To death! And hath he sent no surgeon?
Pal. Nay,
That were the greater risk for him and me.
Mar. Not so, if he could cure thee. I shall bring one. [*As going.*
Pal. It cannot be.
Mar. Thou mayst believe there's none
In all Palermo but myself could do it:

Yet can I do it.

Pal. Speak with Manuel first.

Mar. Oh! I shall tell him all. He will consent.
'Tis well I came. No surgeon for thee! Ah!
I go.

Pal. Thou wilt return?

Mar. Be sure, be sure.
And with the leech. [*Exit.*

Pal. She is gone.

[*Scene shuts across.*

SCENE · 4

In Manuel's house. *MARGARET and MANUEL meeting.*

MARGARET.

Brother, what wilt thou say? Wilt thou forgive me?
Hear me confess.

MANUEL.

What now, my mischief-maker?

Mar. I have seen Palicio.

Man. Hey! 'twas thy evil genius
Led thee that way.

Mar. I thinking him a woman,

Offered some service: whereupon he told me
Who he was, all his story, and of his wound.
Man. I am sorry; I should have warned thee, for
the knowledge
Makes thee so far accomplice; and I know not
How 'twill be taken when 'tis known.
Mar. O, brother,
Thou hast done nobly.
Man. I will tell to thee
My motives.
Mar. Nay, I need no motives.
Man. Hear them.
Palicio's life is forfeit, for he has killed
Three of his guards: but to the dangerous deed
He had provocation, such as I should hold
Clears him of crime: wherefore I take upon me
To force a loan of Justice while she sleeps,
For fear a thief should rob her: to this, moreover,
The claim of kinship binds me,—nay, be patient,
And hear me out.—Already our disorders
Have been reported at the Spanish court;
The enquiry set on foot will much endamage
Hugo's good name: I doubt not we shall have
Another viceroy, and the revolution
Will justify the movers.
Mar. Oh! all that,

Be as it may, will never cure his wound.
He needs a surgeon: we must find a surgeon.
Man. No: he must lie concealed till I procure
His pardon. His discovery now were death.
Mar. But if I bring one secretly?
Man. How secretly?
Better cry down the streets the man is here:
That might escape attention.
Mar. I know a man.
Have I not sometimes shewn thee certain sonnets
Writ in Sicilian speech?
Man. Eh! Michael Rosso?
Mar. 'Tis he. I think he'd love to do my bidding
In a more dangerous matter. Give me leave,
I'll bring him here to-night.
Man. I had thought of him,
But shrank from taxing his good-will. And yet—
(*Aside.*) For his own sake 'twere kind . . . and Margaret asks it . . .
Secrets, they say, discover sympathies.—
(*Aloud.*) Ay, 'tis well thought of.
Mar. I can answer for him.
Man. I see. Yet there's no cause why he should know.
Escort him blindfold hither; let Palicio
Have his face covered. Let him ask no questions:

And when 'tis done convey him blindfold back.
'Twere best he should not know.

Mar. O, brother, I thank thee.

Man. Why, girl, thou'rt crazed.

Mar. May I not go at once?

Man. Nay, wait till dusk; and see, take here my seal,
Since thou must go alone: 'twill be thy freedom
From any questionings of any people.
Use all precautions, and impose on Rosso
Sacredest secrecy: 'tis thou and he
Must carry it thro'. Be careful.

Mar. I will put on
Some common clothing, and disguise my face.
I thank thee. [*Exit.*

Man. The girl's in love. Now, bravo Rosso!
I wish thee well. There's not a purer spirit
Fleshed in all Sicily; nay, nor a man
I'd sooner call brother. Why, 'twas my choice,
Long urged in vain. That chanceth in an hour
Which comes not in nine years. 'Tis very true,
Fancy resents all judgment, and another's
Will often kill it quite. Now, when I looked
Rather for anything than my own wish,—heigh-ho!
'Tis I that stand in the way. I must discourage it.

Enter Philip (with some papers).

Ah, Philip.

PHILIP.

Let me give you back the papers.
I have read them.

Man. Well?

Ph. The viceroy's guilt is plain.
Your purpose cannot be to press this count.

Man. If the complaints, which I have already made,
Be quashed at court, I shall.

Ph. 'Tis peculation
So gross, 'twould ruin Hugo to expose it.
Wished you to break with him,—yet his disgrace
Cannot be nothing to you: I should marvel
You had no associations, no affections,
Shocked at the thought.

Man. To interests manifold
As manifest, Justice is blind. If Spain
Remove not Hugo on the charges laid,
I have shewn thee what's to follow. Would you avert it,
Press his dismissal. I must to the palace.
Guard thou the papers for me till I am back. [*Exit.*

Ph. These papers are conviction. Blasco is right:
He loves not. That is clear; for he would ruin
Her father. Then again my rivalry
Avowed,—ay, if he had an ear, avowed,—

He doth not see. So cold, how could he win her?
Or wish to win her? She is mine.—And yet I would
'Twere any man but Manuel. Ah! who comes?
'Tis she. Now may I prove her.

Enter Constance with Servant.

CONSTANCE (*to servt.*).

If she be not within, prithee enquire
Where she is gone. I will await thee here.
[*Exit servt.*
I have been most foolish. (*Seeing Philip.*) Philip!

Ph. Yes, 'tis I.
Constance.

Con. What wouldst thou?

Ph. (*kneeling*). I entreat a favour,
Which is to me the one boon in the world.

Con. Rise, sir, what is't?

Ph. That I may speak, nor leave
Love's wound unhealed.

Con. 'Twere well to seal forgiveness,
Companion of forgetfulness. Say, therefore,
The few words that are due.

Ph. Tho' I repent,
Repentance cannot own forgetfulness.
It pleads forgiveness in the name of love.

Con. How in that name?

Ph. Constance, I love thee still.
Con. Sir!
Ph. Oh! 'tis true . . .
Reproach me not, Constance: my evil life
I have quite renounced. I used it but to learn
The wisdom of that other. I come back
From folly and idleness and evil days.
Whate'er hath been, Constance, I have not left thee:
There hath been nothing near thee, nothing like thee,
Nothing but thee: and I return to find thee
More beautiful than ever . . .
Con. Pray you, sir,
Remember.
Ph. Let me speak.
Con. When thou didst ask to speak,
I looked for that one word, which thou in honour
Wert, to amend thy silence, bound to speak.
'Twas in thy power to salve thy breach of faith
With full and free renouncement. Thine earlier ill
I had then forgiven: for if thou art not changed,
Philip, I am: then I was ignorant—
Maybe we both were—both mistook; but thou
Didst add an injury, and to-day thou addest
Another worse. Knowing me now betrothed,
How canst thou offer to renew thy love?

Ph. O, Constance, Manuel doth not, cannot, love thee
As I.
Con. I pray he doth not.
Ph. Hear me, Constance!
Con. Nay, sir; no more. [*Exit.*
Ph. My passion hath aroused
Passion in her; and that must work for me.
Is it likely such a temper would sit down
And eat cold fare at Manuel's feast of reason?
She will be mine. Ay, tho' she said betrothed—
Once 'twas to me. So now to see her father;
He's but a market where I rule with ease.
The papers! By heav'n, I had left them lying! [*Stoops.*
Ha!
Blood! blood upon the floor! I have knelt in blood.—
Here were an omen, were I superstitious.—
And scarcely dry. This city hath fallen accurst.
There is nothing spoke of . . . Ah! but what if this
Should be the track they seek? Palicio
Took shelter here! Impossible. Even Blasco
Thought not so ill of Manuel. Yet the other
Under the wall, and this within the house . . .
They tally. Peace! I will go search the garden.
[*Exit.*

SCENE · 5

Room in Manuel's house. PALICIO *as before* (*sitting*).

PALICIO.

To stand true to a cause because 'tis noble,
Tho' it be thankless; to command a people
Against a tyranny, and teach their arms
To enforce the reasonable rights of life,
Beneath the crushing bond of wealth and power;—
To be an outcast, but to leave a name
Untarnished and beloved, remembered long;—
That was my choice, my hope. Can I now waver?
Shall I—having so well begun—
Step up into a throne above the throng,
And smiling on them from the hated height,
Take life at ease? Nay, when 'tis reasoned so,
'Tis hideous.—But, oh! thou treacherous enemy,
Thou selfish and unanswerable passion,
That bluntest resolution, and criest down
The voice of virtue! Margaret, Margaret!
Would I had never seen thee, or believed
I could not win thee. If I now could fly,
I might go free.

Squarcialupu, who has appeared at the window, gradually thrusting his head between the curtains, and peering round, enters.

SQUARCIALUPU.

Sq. Captain!

Pal. Ha! Squarcialupu!
Why, what! how com'st thou here? what dost thou?

Sq. Hush!

Pal. Begone, I pray.

Sq. Nay, now I have found thee, captain.
Thine arm is it only?

Pal. A prick in the arm.

Sq. So, so! 980
Then thou canst come.

Pal. Tell me, how didst thou learn
That I was here?

Sq. We guessed it from thy track.

Pal. O, God! I'm tracked?

Sq. Thy blood is on the wall.
I undertook to tell thee. In the dusk
I scaled this window at the back of the house:
Had my old luck, captain. Make haste and fly.

Pal. Stay, stay! I cannot. Is it known to any
I am hiding here?

Sq. What use to stay for that?

Come ere they know it.

Pal. I cannot.

Sq. I can help thee.

Pal. Nay, 'tis not that, altho' I am bled to death.
'Tis honour holds me.

Sq. Honour will not help
Manuel nor thee, if they should search his house.
But if thou fliest . . .

Pal. I may not.

Sq. That's no word
Where life's at stake. What shall I tell thy men?

Pal. Where are they?

Sq. At the news of thy escape
They gathered on the hills, and wait thee there.
I met a man in the town an hour ago,
Who said he had seen thee riding on the road
To Monreale. All the folk's astir.

Pal. I cannot come.

Sq. Give me not such a word.
Who would believe I had seen thee, if I said
Palicio lieth safe in Manuel's house,
And saith he cannot come?

Pal. Begone, I bid thee,
Lest thou be found here.

Sq. Nay, I'll not be gone.
'Tis but some twenty feet: I'll lift thee down.

The street is watched.

Pal. Hark, Squarcialupu, tell me;
Is't true I'm tracked?

Sq. 'Tis certain.

Pal. Then I think
If Manuel knew of this . . . Hark, I will come.
Go thou and tell my men that I will come.
To-morrow morning let them look to find me
At Monreale. If I come not then
Let none look for me more. But if I come
All shall be well. Go thou and tell them this.

Sq. Come, captain, while thou mayst.

Pal. I bid thee go.
Obey me at once.

Sq. (*whistles at window and is answered*). I have thy promise.
To-morrow we shall see thee. [*Exit.*

Pal. But for this cursed wound
I had fled. To cure it must I risk my soul?
Fool that I was, had I escaped with him
I might have found a surgeon—now when she comes
I will say nothing. Nothing . . . yet, that's no hope;
For seeing her I must love her: and if I fail
To win her wholly, I must lose my soul.
She is here. (*Aside.*) Ah! what is this?

Enter Margaret, with Rosso blindfold.

MARGARET (*to Rosso*).

You now are in the room. Stand in your place.
While I make ready. (*To Pal.*) Let me wrap this cloth
About thy face. Lie ever still, and speak not.
(*To Rosso.*) Your eyes, sir, are at liberty.

ROSSO (*unbandaging*).

Coming hither,
I thought 'twould make a pretty poem to tell
Of one, whose cruel mistress ne'er allowed
The meanest favour, till he dreamed one night
That he was blind, and she, in pity of him,
Led him forth by the hand where he would go,
But left him suddenly; whereat he awoke,
And wished no more to see . . .

Mar. Now, sir Apollo, come. Here lies your patient.
Give him your aid, and tell your poem after.

Ros. Well, let us see. Ay, here is all I need.
Set them thus on the table, and here the light,
So. (*arranging*). 'Tis the right arm. (*unbinding.*) Ah!
when was this done?

Mar. Have you forgot, sir? questions are forbidden.

Ros. See, thou must hold his arm for me. Press here
Thy fingers; firmly,—so. Thou dost not faint
At sight of blood?

Mar. Nay, nay. And yet I know not.
If there be much, I faint.

Ros. (*operating*). I had forgotten
I might not question;—'tis a surgeon's habit.—
First,—for where all are eager with their tale,—
'Tis only courteous to invite the telling:—
But chiefly—that it stablishes his judgment—
Built on appearances,—and banishes
Conjecture from experience;—as 'twould now
For me,—should this man say,—'twas yesterday
The wound was made;—and he that dealt it me
Stood on my left,—and thro' my arm outstretched,—
In attitude of striking at another,—
Thrust with—a sword.—Stir not, 'tis nearly done.—
But I withdrew my arm ere he his weapon.—
Loose not thy grasp · loose not!

Mar. Sir, my attention
Was taken by your story. Never speak:
'Twill mar your work.

Ros. 'Tis a small thing. 'Tis done.
'Twas an unlucky lunge that lanced thee there.
(*To Mar.*) What thinkest thou of my story?

Mar. 'Twas but guessing.

Ros. Nay, inference. 'Twere guess to say, the skill
Which staunched the running blood, but could no more,
Might be thy brother's: that this sunburnt arm,
Fine skin, and youthful fibre, were the body
Of John Palicio.

Pal. (*discovering*). I am betrayed!

Ros. Not so:
Then had I held my tongue.

Pal. True.—What's thy name?

Ros. My name is Rosso. Sling thine arm across:
There must it rest until the wound be healed.

Mar. You have guessed the secret, sir, which we withheld
In your respect. This is my brother's house;
This is Palicio. Guard now what you have learned
As closely, I pray, as if we had freely told it.

Ros. Not to thee, lady, though in this and all
I am thy servant; yet not now to thee
I speak, but to Giovànn Palicio;
To whom I say he need not ask of me
Promise or oath. The good I am proud to have done
I shall not spoil by blabbing.

Pal. Thank thee, Rosso.

Ros. Noble and brave Palicio, mayst thou prosper.
[*Bandaging his own eyes.*

Pal. Thank thee, I thank thee, Rosso. So now my arm
Is mended. By heaven! this surgery hath a trick
Worth knowing, could one learn it easily.

Ros. (*blindfold*). Come, lady, and lead me forth.

Mar. Why, what is this?

You know your way: there's nothing now to hide.

Ros. Didst thou not bargain with me to lead me back?

Mar. But there's no need.

Ros. Yet will I claim my fee.
Where is thy hand?

Mar. Sir, you but trifle.

Ros. And thou
Refusest me in a trifle? Then I will dare (*unbandaging*)
To raise my terms. If I may kiss thy hand
I'll be content.

Mar. 'Tis I, sir, should kiss yours.
'Tis that hath earned the homage: and I'll be kind.
That hath done well; and thus I kiss it. (*Kisses Rosso's hand.*) Now,
Go, go in peace: thou'rt paid. [*Making him go out.*

[*Exit Rosso.*

Pal. (*sitting*). Why didst thou that?

Mar. He loves me.

Pal. Wouldst thou be as kind to me,
If I should love thee?

Mar. But he sends me sonnets.

Pal. I could write sonnets.

Mar. Ah, but his are writ
In pure Sicilian.

Pal. 'Tis my proper tongue.

Mar. I have kept my promise, sir, and now must leave.

Your wound is healed.

Pal. I fear I scarce can thank thee,
If 'tis thy word to go. Or, if thou stayest
But to cure wounds,—I have another wound
I shewed thee not, which hath a deeper seat:
This hand may cure it.

Mar. Nay, what mean you, sir?

Pal. Margaret, I love thee. There, thou hast it all.
Thou hast stolen my soul. I thought—my pride, my hope—
O, I thought wrong—'tis nothing. All I have done,
Or would do, I cast aside: I love thee only.

Mar. Giovanni.

Pal. O, 'tis true, there's nothing noble,
Beautiful, sacred, dear, familiar to me,
I hold now at a straw's worth: body and soul
I am thine, Margaret, I am thine. O, answer me!

Mar. Giovanni, 'tis so strange. 'Tis best I go.

Pal. Thou didst kiss Rosso's hand.

Mar. For love of thee.
Didst thou not guess?

Pal. O, then, my dearest, kiss me
Now for myself. Can it be true thou lovest me?

Mar. Alas! 'tis learned too quickly.
Pal. Can I think it,
Spite of my savage life, my outlawry,
My poverty?
Mar. O, what are these?
Pal. Indeed,
My blood is noble.
Mar. These are not the checks
Or lures of love. Nay, what is noble blood?
What were't to be a lion, and to fly
The hunter like a hare? And if man shew
Less fearless fierce and hungry for the right
Than doth a beast for food, what is his title
To be God's image worth? That best nobility
Hath no more claim.
Pal. But canst thou share my life?
Mar. I am restless for it.
Pal. Leave thy rank? thy wealth?
Mar. I have lived too long that counterfeit of life.
I'll strive like thee: something I'll do, like thee,
To lessen misery. Nay, if man's curse
Hang in necessity, I have the heart
To combat that, and find if in some part
Fate be not vulnerable.
Pal. O joy, my dearest:
I wronged thee ages by a moment's thought

That thou wouldst shrink . . . Then is our marriage fixed?

Mar. There's none can hinder it.

Pal. O, blessed joy!
Yet how can I be sure, love, that thou knowest,
Finding the word so easy, what a mountain
There lies to lift? Pledging to me and mine
Thy heart this hour, a hundred thousand stings
Will plague thee from this moment, to drive thee back.

Mar. Try me, Giovanni.

Pal. Wilt thou aid me, love,
To fly to-night? By morning I may meet
My men at San Martino: all my schemes
May yet be saved.

Mar. Ah! wilt thou go, Giovanni?
Thou'rt yet too weak.

Pal. My presence, not my strength,
Is needed.

Mar. Alas! I fear.

Pal. What, Margaret, dost thou fear?

Mar. Only for thee. Yet go; I can be with thee
By noon. My brother has a little house
At Monreale, where I am used to stay
When the wish takes me. There I'll go to-morrow,
And thence can visit thee. Thou didst not mean
I should not come? I shall not hinder thee.

Pal. Nay, nay.

Mar. I'll let thee from the house to-night,
And give thee money which will aid thee well.
My brother need know nothing. I can make
The journey thither in an hour, and choose
My time to beg his grace.

Pal. What do I owe thee!
Freedom, and life, and love,—thy love . . O, Margaret,
What I shall do will pay thee.

Mar. I must leave:
For Manuel else will question of my stay.

Pal. My treasure lost so soon!

Mar. I go to save
What we have won. Farewell.

Pal. Say at what hour
I may go hence; and how.

Mar. At dead of night:
'Tis safest then.

Pal. And wilt thou come thyself?

Mar. When the church bell with double stroke hath tolled
The death-knell of to-morrow's second hour,
While its last jar yet shelters in the ear,
Listen: and at thy door when thou shalt catch
A small and wakeful noise, such as is made
By the sharp teeth of an unventurous mouse,

Scraping his scanty feast when all is still,
Come forth. Thou'lt meet my hand, and at the gate
I'll give thee what I have. Tied in thy bundle
Will be a letter shewing thee the place
Where thou must send me tidings. Now, farewell.

Pal. Yet not farewell.

Mar. To-night I shall not see thee:
Nor must thou speak. So, till to-morrow's sun
Lasts our farewell.

Pal. Then with to-morrow, Margaret,
My life begins.

Mar. O, 'tis the greater joy
For me than thee.

Pal. Ay, for the giver ever
Hath the best share. And thus I kiss thee, love.
Farewell.

Mar. Be ready.

Pal. Trust me.

Mar. And take thy dagger.
Farewell. [*Going.*

ACT. III

SCENE. 1

Hall in Manuel's house. MANUEL and MARGARET.

MANUEL.

NAY, 'twas ill done. The open window shews
He made a breakneck leap into the street.
I searched the room, in case he might have left
Some explanation written: there was none.
I am vexed. 'Tis a most graceless breach of trust.

MARGARET.

What promise made he?

Man. None was asked. The knowledge
Of duty were enough to bind a man
Far less obliged. And then 'tis thankless, Margaret.
Twice have we saved his life: first I, then thou:
And while we sleep he flies. I blame myself,
I should have pledged his word.

Mar. Hadst thou so done,

He would have stayed.

Man. I know not. Now he is gone . .
Go set his room as if he had never been.
We must forget the matter. I have summons
From Hugo, and must leave.

Mar. And when I have done
Thy bidding, may I go to Monreale?

Man. You wish it?

Mar. Yes.

Man. What calls you there?

Mar. A visit
I'll take Lucia, and can ride Rosamund.

Man. Nay, nay, I would not have it. Thou wilt meet
With Rosso's people, maybe Rosso himself;
And he might misinterpret . . and I think
So soon after your game of blindman's buff,
That since thou canst not love him . . .

Mar. Manuel, I promise—

Man. I want no promises; but if thou goest
Remember . . .

Mar. Why, I'll promise . . .

Man. Nay, I bid.
Only be wise. Wilt thou be back to-night?

Mar. To-morrow, may I stay so long?

Man. Ay, stay.

Have good care of thyself. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Mar. Farewell.

(*Calling.*) Lucia, Lucia; come, Lucia, come!

Enter Lucia.

LUCIA.

My lady.

Mar. To horse, Lucia! we start at once.
Order the horses.

Lu. Holy Mary, defend us!
It cannot be thou meanest . . .

Mar. What is this, now?
Last night didst thou not promise?

Lu. If I did,
'Twas madness: think of the risk.

Mar. I take the risk.

Lu. Consider.

Mar. I have considered.

Lu. O, dear mistress,
I fear all will not end well; think again.
Think what thou leavest.

Mar. I think I shall leave thee.

Lu. But when shall we return?

Mar. Maybe to-morrow.
Order the horses. I shall go without thee.
Quick, quick, begone!

Lu. Well, well. Thou hast found a man: I being a woman must help thee, tho' 'tis madness.

Mar. Go, girl: I know it. Thou'lt be true, Lucia: Only be quick.

Lu. Well, well: may heaven forgive us. [*Exit.*

Mar. Forgive, she saith. Forgive me rather, oh heaven!
The sourness of my spirit hitherto:
Yet now forgive me not if I dare tamper
With this intrinsic passion. O joy, my joy!
This beauteous world is mine:
All Sicily is mine:
This morning mine. I saw the sun, my slave,
Poising on high his shorn and naked orb
For my delight. He there had stayed for me,
Had he not read it in my heart's delight
I bade him on. The birds at dawn sang to me,
Crying 'Is life not sweet? O is't not sweet?'
I looked upon the sea; there was not one,
Of all his multitudinous waves, not one,
That with its watery drift at raking speed
Told not my special joy. O happy lovers
In all the world, praise God with me: his angels
Envy us, seeing we are his favourites.
What else could grant such joy? Now on my journey
Must I set forth, to be a brigand's wife . . .

That's but the outward of it, and looks strange:
For, oh, the heart of it is a fire of passion
To lick up trifling life. Away, such dainty stuff:
Let me stand forth myself.—Yet ere I go
I must send Constance word. To whom to trust
My letter? Ah, Philip . .

Enter Philip.

PHILIP.

Good morning, Margaret.

Mar. Good morning, duke: thou goest to the palace?

Ph. Ay.

Mar. May I ask thee, then, to bear this letter
To Constance? I'd not trust it willingly
Where it might wander.

Ph. 'Twill pass from my hands
To hers.

Mar. Pray tell her, for my health I go
To Monreale, or would have come myself.

Ph. I'll tell her so. I pray the change restore thee,—
And soon. Indeed thou look'st not well. Farewell.

Mar. Farewell. (*Aside.*) Look I then ill? I never felt
So light and keen in spirit. [*Exit.*

Ph. (*solus*). This fits in, too. She is sent to Monreale,
Lest she should make discovery. 'Tis thus
I join the threads. Palicio climbed the wall,

Came hither thro' the garden: here he stayed
And bound his wound. So far the track. There has been
At least no care to hide it; and now he lies
In the room across the courtyard: wherefore else
Drawn curtains, and the lamp, which yesterday
Burnt, as I saw, in the afternoon? All credit
To the king's commissioner. Yet must I dissemble,
And not appear in the matter. 'Tis incredible
Of Manuel. What will he allege? He is gone
To the palace now: thither must I, and face him.

[*Exit.*

SCENE. 2

On the hills above Monreale. Brigands fantastically dressed and armed are seated about on the rocks, with drinking-cups and remains of feast. PALICIO, *in a black suit, his right arm in a sling. Much talking and singing, or the scene may open with the following song—*

SONG.

I would not change the hills that I range
For a house in the city street:
Nor the price on my head for a tax on my bread.
Liberty, lads, is sweet.

(*Palicio getting up on a rock waves them to silence.*)

SQUARCIALUPU.

Long live Lord Palicio!

All. Huzzah! Huzzah!

PALICIO.

Thank you, my men. Now silence; I must tell you
The feast is o'er, our meeting at an end.
We have laid our plans: but their success depends
On zealous preparation. Ye must to work.

A brigand. We have another song yet, captain.

Pal. See ye the sun is on this side of the city.

Brigands. The song, the song!

Pal. What is this song ye call for?

A brigand. May't please your honour,
If Squarcia sing we'll be content.

Sq. I know
What they would have.

Pal. Sing then: and cut it short.

Sq. Nay, that lies with the chorus. Who hath the lute?

SONG.

If you'd hear me sing,
Why give me a skin of wine.
Creatures have their several ways,
Edod! and I have mine,
CHOR. *And I have mine.* (*ad lib.*)
Edod! and I have mine.

If you'd see me fight,
Why let me taste good cheer.
Was not I as good as my word?
Edod! am I not here?

CHOR. *Am I not here?* (*ad lib.*)

(*Palicio gets up as before.*)

Sq. Enough, enough! silence! Now were ye not
A set of loons . . . make silence for the captain.
Pal. Hark, men: I bid you leave, each silently
And separately to his allotted task.
Gather your companies at tryst to-night;
Acquaint them of our plans. Once, ere ye go,
Look on those tyrannous towers, and swear revenge.
Revenge on them that grind the people down!
That tax our bread and wine! To-morrow night
Hugo shall need no candles.
Brigands. Revenge, revenge. Huzzah! Death to Hugo!
Burn him!
Pal. Not him, the palace: 'tis to burn the palace.
Him we must take alive.
Brigands. Not kill him, no.
Treat him as he would us.
Pal. If ye love colour,
His gold is ruddier than his coward blood.

Brigands. Ay, ay, his gold—a ransom. Bleed his bags.

Pal. Above all, none forget good Manuel's kindness,
And what I have told you. If any meet with him
And hurt a hair of his head, 'tis . . .

Brigands. Death.

Pal. 'Tis death.
Swear all, 'tis death.

All. We swear.

Pal. Now to your work.

Brigands. Huzzah!

Pal. Secretly, then. Farewell! To-morrow night
I'll meet you all. God grant us a good meeting.
Farewell. [*Exit.*

Brigands. Huzzah! 1330

During following scene the brigands going, carrying off things to cave.

Sq. Come, help clear off this gear to the cave.

A brigand. Any wine in yon skin, good Squarcia?

Sq. Ay, for the chewing.

Brig. Thank ye. I'm off. Good-day, lads. [*Exit.*

Sq. Did I not well, I say?

A brigand. But how didst thou find him?—tell us.

Sq. Trust me. Not that 'twas a thing within the

bounds of mortal cleverness if a man should want luck. But I'd buy the dog that would have run as straight for him, as 'twere denoted by scent or instinct. To climb the very wall, and in at the window, and there to see him just face to face: on a fine couch in a pleasant chamber enough, with his arm bandaged . . .

Brig. Is his arm broke?

Sq. Ay, and where the nerve runs to the heart: the lady told me a thousand times that 'twere mortal to move it; and the surgeon who bound it said that his balance hung by a thread.

Brig. The lady was with him, then. Didst thou see her?

Sq. It's not all I see I'm bound to tell. But if she was not there, how should she be here? And had I not persuaded her, would she have let him come, think you? And that a matter of disputation, an hour and more.

Brig. How could she stay him?

Sq. Let alone wounds and surgeons, shall a lady have nothing to say? And she's hard hit, I take it. A fine piece, and brings money with her.

Brig. And what may spoil his fighting.

Sq. Wilt thou grudge the captain what he has fairly won? Or must thou be served first?

Brig. Serve me soon, and serve me well. Yet I like not the lady. [*Exit.*

Sq. Nay, nor the coin neither, I'll go bound. How should he? Nay . . . Wouldn't old Beedo now have liked to have been here?

A brigand. Well, he would.

Another. Why came he not?

Sq. A bad reason, man, but a good excuse.

Brig. How mean you?

Sq. As if thou hadst never been on the wrong side of four walls! tell not me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Palicio and Margaret.

Pal. Now thou know'st all.

MARGARET.

But is that all, Giovanni?

Pal. Saw'st thou them well from where thou wert?

Mar. Ay, tell me:
The man in the blue jacket, who is he?

Pal. That's Squarcialupu: he's my first lieutenant. Did they not greet me?

Mar. I could count eighteen.
Are there no more?

Pal. The least of these can muster
Twenty as brave.

Mar. That's not six hundred men.
Pal. But with them I can raise the town.
Mar. 'Tis pity
The barons stand aloof.
Pal. They hold together
On certain claims that touch their own estate.
But in their hate of Hugo they will join us
At first report of our success; and that
I'll make flame forth.
Mar. Alas! what canst thou do,
Having so little means?
Pal. To-morrow night
We shall surround the palace and capture Hugo.
Mar. One regiment could drive all thy men away.
Pal. He dare not give the word.
Mar. How know'st thou that?
Pal. I have sprung a cranny in his council-board,
Thro' which crumbs fall to me.
Mar. Nay, but you force him . .
The viceroy to yield up his power to a rebel!
Hugo, his person to your hated hands!
Pal. Well, he may fly; and then my word is, *Sack And fire the palace.*
Mar. Giovanni, if he fight,
Thou wilt be killed or taken.
Pal. And what of that?

Mar. What, askest thou! ask what! Methinks the world
Holds but one treasure—thee: and thou dost wrong
Creation, staking all her store at once
On such a sleight of fortune. It shall not be.
Nay, for my sake it shall not. Dost thou love me?
Pal. Love thee? O, Margaret, when I look on thee,
And see the dazzling wealth, with which I hardly
Shall scrape to heaven, may God forgive me, love,
But I would be for ever pinched in hell,
Rather than miss thee.
Mar. To me art thou as precious:
Therefore be wise. Where is the list of names?
Pal. 'Tis here.
Mar. What read I here? These are thy captains,
Palicio: these thy rivals, Margaret!
Why, 'mongst these names—nay, tho' I here see names
Renowned for outrage—there is not one name
Of such respect, that I can think it possible
Its leadership can bid thee cast away
Thy life, my life, our love.
Pal. They are all brave men.
Mar. They are ignorant, desperate, and reckless men.
Pal. 'Tis by such recklessness I come at right.

Mar. 'Tis recklessness throughout. See, thou art wounded
And weak; a price upon thy head: think of it,—
And trust the people's rights to Manuel;
Leave them to the barons: we've a better task:
Sail o'er to Rome, there reassume thy rank;
Let us be married, and await the day
That Manuel finds thy pardon.
Pal. Tempt me not, Margaret.
Mar. Else are we lost.
Pal. Nay, fear not: there's a traitor
In the enemy's camp; from whom I'll have such tidings
As will ensure success.
Mar. Who is it?
Pal. Blasco.
Mar. Blasco!
Pal. He hath your money; and for that price
Will tell how Hugo may be best surprised.
That is my venture, Margaret . . . If it fail . . .
Mar. Thou wilt be slain.
Pal. Nay, I may still escape.
Mar. And then thou'lt come?
Pal. I will.
Mar. Promise but that:
That if this venture fail, and thou escape,
Thou wilt not risk again.

Pal. Ay, if I fail.

Mar. Promise.

Pal. I promise.

Mar. Thou wilt lose nothing, for my brother alone
Can do much more than thou with these base men,
Who stain the cause. One favour more.

Pal. What is it?

Mar. 'Tis that this evening, love, be spent together.

Pal. I mean it should. To-night our fellows meet
In various rendezvous, as you may see
Upon the paper. There are ten in all
They will not need my presence till to-morrow,
When the bands join at sundown. O, Margaret:
I knew that thou wouldst come.

Mar. I think, Giovanni,
Thou shouldst have met me first thyself: thy men
Are rough.

Pal. Was any rude?

Mar. Nay, 'twas well meant,
But sounded strangely.

Pal. Say but who it was.

Mar. No, 'tis forgiven.

Pal. (*going*). Kiss me.

Mar. Ah, now, Giovanni,
Where wilt thou go?

Pal. But for one hour, my dearest,

I must be absent. Then shall I be yours
For all the day.

Mar. Farewell. And prithee send
Lucia. I will await thee.

Pal. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Mar. I have his promise,
If this scheme fail. 'Tis mine to make it fail.
O, 'tis too dangerous: to trust so far
That dollar-ballasted Iscariot,
The weather-trimming Blasco.—The paper! the list!
I'll have their names. Where can I write them? Ah!
My prayer-book. I will send them straight to Hugo.
Poor Constance! Burn the palace! Ay, and thee,
For aught they care. Now, who comes first? Bendettu
Jacupu . . and your place?—within the cloister 1463
Of Santo Spirito. Next, Squarcialupu . . .
Why, that's the ruffian who would like a dozen
Wives such as I. He'll find one were too many.
Go you to prison, sir, and cool your thoughts.
You burn the palace!—Messer Vincentiu
Lazaru . . at his peltry shed at Baido.
Now there's two pages of them: the little prayers
Will hardly shrive them . . . here's one I cannot read.
B-o-n-o-Bononio, now I have him. 1472
Why who could trust such men? Set them in power
But for a day . . . say this next villain here,

Fardello . . he's a murderer—ay, for him
I write his death, maybe: but for the rest
I'll take such care that Manuel's voice shall ease
Their accusation. Now I have them all.
Lucia! Ho, Lucia!

Enter Lucia.

See, take this book:
Return straight to Palermo: find some friend,
Whom thou canst trust: commit it to her hands;
Tell her to give it secretly to Livio,
Bidding him read what is writ down in the margins;
And say 'twas given to her by one she knew not,
And with that message. All our happiness
Is staked on this. Begone. Haste for thy life.

LUCIA.

Alas! what's this?

Mar. Why, have I frighted thee?
Be brave: I tell thee on this single thread
My life is hanging.

Lu. Trust me, lady, I'd risk
Ten lives for that.

Mar. Hide it. I trust thee. Go.
I have played a bold stroke here: but if it prosper,
For Constance, and Giovanni, and myself,
'Tis not ill done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 3

A room in the Palace. Enter HUGO and CONSTANCE.

HUGO.

Thou hast a daughter's duty, I a father's:
'Tis mine to seek thy good, thine to obey.

CONSTANCE.

I pray thee, father, hear me.

Hu. I have heard thee.
Thou tellest me nought but what I know. The duke
Hath been with me: his purpose to renew
His suit hath my support. 'Tis very honourable—
It shall be welcome. Though thy words to him
Betrayed reluctance, that makes yet no reason
To shun him. He will presently be here:
Stay and receive him.

Con. O, if I do not dream,
Heaven help me now!

Hu. Constance, I pray, be sober.
I am sorry for thee: but what seems thy grief
Will be thy comfort, when thou learn'st the cause
Which presses me to urge it.

Con. What lies behind?

What misery? Say!

Hu. Manuel, whom late we trusted,
Hath turned against me. He hath joined the rebels.

Con. Who dares to slander him?

Hu. Fact makes no room
For slander. The devil himself could not invent
A tale to blacken him. First to the court
He hath writ of me in secret, in the sense
That I have stirred the king's men to rebellion
By my misrule; and all the while at home
He feeds the mischief, and most treacherously
Favours the rebels, so to magnify
The blame on me he charges.

Con. The crime's too great.
If this be all I breathe again. The time
When thou wilt prove this 'twill away like smoke.
Not till 'tis proved question our marriage, father.

Hu. The question now with him is not of marriage,
But of his head.

Con. Shame, shame! if these be words,
What is their sense?

Hu. To-morrow, or to-day,
I shall have proof.

Con. I knew 'twas all unproven.
Who brought this lie, and propped it with the promise
To make it true?

Hu. Go, girl, I hear the duke.
He must not see thee thus.
Con. So far is well.
I gladly go.—Dear father!
Hu. Go take thy grief
Where thou canst comfort it. This Manuel
Hath not deceived thee more than me, and me
Would have more grossly wronged.
Con. Alas! alas! [*Exit.*
Hu. The proof will be to search his house, and so
Both knaves are caught at once. Now to that end
Lest he get wind of it I have bid him hither,
And shall detain him till 'tis done.

Enter Philip.

Your grace,
I have stayed for you.

PHILIP.

'Tis well. I bring conviction.
Palicio lies in Manuel's house. His room
Is locked and darkened: save for that, and orders
That none shall enter, there is no precaution.
Hu. The abominable Pharisee!
Ph. Now Margaret hath been hurried from the house
On plea of health: I bear a letter from her
To Constance.

Hu. Give't me.

Ph. Pardon, your excellence;
I promised I would see it in Constance's hands.

Hu. My hands are hers: a daughter cannot read
Letters her father may not. Nay, the more
Such right's resented, more's the need to use it.—
And from a traitor's house!

Ph. (*giving*). Your privilege, sir,
Invades my honour.

Hu. Tut, tut, tut, 'tis mine: [*Takes it.*
Be not so squeamish. [*Reads.*

I can write all's well.
Yet, as thou lovest Manuel, breathe no word
Of aught I saw. I go from home to-day;
Will see thee when returned.—Why, this is nothing.

Ph. Taken alone 'twere nothing; but there's nothing
Could better fit our knowledge; nay it adds
To what we know. I see that Margaret flies
From the discovery that she hath made herself;
And fears for Manuel. I grieve but for her.
His enmity to you precludes all pity.
I have come to see his papers, which contain
Charges against your excellence, prepared
With such unfriendly skill, that to discredit them,
Should ever they reach court, would cost far more
Than any price or pains you now might spend

In their suppression.

Hu. O, the double-faced
Pretentious Greek! But in this other matter
We have him. I'll charge the deed to his face. He'll not
Deny it. The embassy delayed last night
May sail this evening, and with them aboard
Shall Manuel fare to the king with his accusers.
We shall at least be rid of him. I will call him.

[*Rings a bell.*

Thou hast done me a good service.

Ph. Shall I remain?

Hu. I beg you. The cursed villain!

Enter Servant.

I await
The chief justiciary. Shew him hither. [*Exit servt.*

Ph. (*aside*). I shall not face him well. He must not guess
My part in this: say he be proved a traitor,
And I abhor all such as undermine
The fabric of the throne,—yet have I shared
His guilt at heart, both in my wish to find it
And from my profit in it! 'Twould seem less foul
To steal a man's fair earnings than to glean
The waste of his crime. I'll stand and take what comes.

Enter Manuel.

MANUEL.

My service to your excellence.

Hu. Ay, well.

'Tis of thy service I would speak. Attend me.
Thou art an honest man; in all Palermo
No name so fair as thine. There's none would dream
That thou at any press wouldst blink the right
In thine own interest: now for these three years
Thou hast done justice honour, holding up
Her majesty for worship: we ourselves
Have strained or waived opinion oftentimes
In trust of thee. 'Twas not then at first hearing
We took the tale which strong concurrent proofs
Now make me charge thee with. Know that 'tis said
That thou hast given a refuge in thy house
To John Palicio. Deny 't, I pray thee.

Man. 'Tis true, your excellence.

Hu. Then first I bid thee
Return him into custody.

Man. Last night
He left me without warning.

Hu. Gone! Then, by heaven!
Thou'rt doubly guilty.

Man. I admit my guilt

Upon the point of negligence: for the rest
I beg your excellence will hear my plea.
Palicio is my kinsman: he was driven
Without his purpose, nor with my connivance,
To shelter in my house. The claim of nature
Withstood the challenge of my royal duty
Suspended now in the interregnum . . .

Hu. Enough!
Thou dost admit the act: 'tis downright treason.
I'll hear no answer. Though thou wouldst deny
My authority, thou shalt not doubt my power.
Thou art my prisoner. To-night the embassy
Will sail for Spain. Thou goest with them to plead
Thy cause before the king.

Man. I shall be ready, sire.

Hu. Thou wilt be here detained until thy house
Is searched: which done thou wilt go home, and there
Resign thy keys. Knowing thy doings, sir,
I treat thee as I find thee. We are enemies.

Man. I pray your excellence, for your daughter's sake . . .

Hu. My daughter! could I wed her to a traitor,
Would she herself consent?

Enter LIVIO with the book, and BLASCO.

Man. Call me not traitor,

Ere I be proved one.

Hu. (*to Bl.*). Ho! call in the guard. [*Exit Blasco.*
(*To Liv.*) What bring you, son? [*Talks with him.*

Man. (*to Ph.*). Philip, before I go;—
Thou see'st my case. Fate would look black upon me,
Left I no friend to speak for me: but thee
I trust. Tell Constance what thou knowest; the rest
Margaret can tell you. Add thereto assurance
Both of my innocence and speedy acquittal.

Re-enter Blasco with Guards.

One word and I am gone. Beware of Blasco.
He bears two faces. See he be not trusted
With aught of moment.

Hu. (*to officer of guard*). The chief justiciary is your prisoner
On charge of treason. Guard him in the palace
Till you hear more.

Man. (*to Ph.*). Stand my friend, and God aid thee.
[*Exit guarded.*

Ph. (*aside*). And so I may. I am not yet stepped so far
That I must push my purpose, where it wounds
Such ample trust.

Hu. Philip, see here.

Ph. What, sire?

Hu. From some most friendly hand we have full tidings
Of all the rebels; where they may be seized
This very night.

Ph. (*to Liv.*). You bring it?

Liv. They are betrayed
By some one of themselves.

Hu. 'Twill end the matter.

Ph. How came you by it?

Liv. A woman brought it me,
Who said 'twas thrust into her hands by one
She knew not, who escaped. She hath since confessed
That 'twas a maid of Manuel's.

Bl. Look you, tho',
How close this follows the discovery
Of Manuel's treason. It must be that some,
On whom he used constraint, smelling his fall
Return to loyalty.

Hu. Most like. Now, Livio,
Seize them to-night. See thou observe in all
The dispositions which I have shewn thee. Stay,
There's first a vacancy to fill: I make thee
Justiciary in Manuel's place: in thine
I will take Blasco for my secretary.
Meanwhile I lend him thee: thou wilt have need
Of his experience.

Liv. I thank thee, father.
Bl. And I, your excellence.
Hu. Now to your work.
And then to Manuel's house, and take possession
Of all thy office gives thee.
[*Exeunt Livio and Blasco.*
Hu. (*to Ph.*). Thy matter next:
I will fetch Constance.
Ph. Not now, I pray, not now!
Hu. Nay, wherefore wait? This business shall be settled
In a few words. I'll bring her to thee straight.
[*Exit.*
Ph. I pray you. Nay, he is gone. I must stand to it.
I play to win; and now the stakes are mine;
Unless against myself for friendship's claim
I should uphold my rival. And he's guilty.
The papers were his own: them he confessed,
And only deepened treason by the excuse
Of kinship with the rebel. And then his servants
Cognizant.—On the other hand his confidence
Staggering the evidence: his trust in me
To comfort Constance. How should Margaret know
More than the facts, or I deny the facts,
Should I plead for him? And yet against the facts

The man himself: his soul revealed to me;
And my persuasion of him. O, he has fallen
To the popular side. Moreover, his acquittal
Were Hugo's ruin. I cannot help him: nay,
Not though I would; and Fate, which thrusts him down,
Is kind to me.

Re-enter Hugo with Constance.

Hu. Constance, see here the duke:
He hath asked your hand of me: and I most happy
In such a match have granted it.
Con. I am here
Fooled by a promise of evil, but not this.
This is not Manuel's treason. First of that:
Where's the pretended proof?
Hu. He hath confessed it.
Con. This tale convicts itself. Treason is close,
And doth not bare the breast. Though here the man
Ye wrong were likelier to confess such crime
Than once be guilty of it.
Hu. He both is guilty
And hath confessed.
Con. To what hath he confessed?
What deed that hatred thus can magnify?
Hu. 'Twas he contrived Palicio's late escape;

And being detected and charged by me therewith,
He hath here this hour confessed it. Since which time
One of his household hath been traced in league
With the conspirators.

Con. I believe it not.
Would he speak for you, he were here to speak.

Hu. But if at least he hath gone out from the palace
Under strict guard, and sails to-night for Spain?

Con. He is gone?

Hu. He is gone.

Con. Under constraint?

Hu. Most certain,
And charged with treason.

Con. (*turning to Ph.*). Now, Philip, I bid thee speak.

Ph. Ay, Constance, it is true, but . . .

Con. Ay? thou too.
Ay and but: falsest falsehood, seeking grace
In shame. I knew devilry lurked about
When I came hither. I'll go. I'll not believe.
I shall know truth at last. [*Going.*

Hu. Nay, Constance, stay.
Philip will answer thee. Thou questionest him;
Hear him with patience. I shall leave thee with him.
Thou hast been a duteous daughter hitherto,
Recover my good grace ere I return.

(*To Ph.*) 'Twas an omission, duke, I gave no order
To seize the villain's servants. I'll go do it.
Use thy occasion. [*Exit.*

Ph. Constance, I beg thy favour.

Con. I stay, your grace,—why should I go? My father
Hath bid me hear thee: and 'tis nought to me.
Say what thou wouldst: speak on, nor be officious
To suit thy meaning to me, for there's nothing
I can believe or doubt.

Ph. O, Constance, think not
That could I end thy sorrow by denial
Of what thou hast heard, I would not. All is true.
My kindest office is to unmask the ill
That this ill hath prevented, and to show thee
A balance of good. There lies 'gainst Manuel
Far more than we have charged and he confessed.
He loves thee, thinkest thou?—He hath used his place
To plot against thy father. I here have papers
In which thyself mayst see what accusation
He hath writ in secret. They are addressed to Spain,
And would have been presented . . .

Con. 'Tis his writing.
Whence was this filched?

Ph. He gave them me himself.

Con. O, a most open foe. Did he enjoin thee

To bear them to my father?

Ph. Nor have I done so.

Con. Then this, duke, yet remains for thee to do.
Take them at once. I know not what they mean:
But if 'tis secret it may be betrayed.
Do it, I pray thee, do it. [*Exit.*

Ph. And I could wince
At such reproach, had I dissembled further
Than loyalty may deign, grappling with treason.
Her anger springs but of that nobleness
Which makes her love worth winning; and in the end
It shall be mine again. [*Exit.*

SCENE · 4

On the hills above Monreale, as before. Enter PALICIO and MARGARET.

MARGARET.

How fresh the morning air is. See how the mist
Melts in the sun, and while we look is gone,
Leisurely gathered on his sloping beams.
And guarded by her angel towers the city
Sleeps like an island in the solemn gray:
'Tis beauteous.—

PALICIO.

I love the city: it holds the stir.
To-night I shall be there, and to do something
Worthy of thee.

Mar. Whate'er thou dost, Giovanni,
I could not love thee more.

Pal. Beneath yon roofs
There's many a heart that quicker beats and leaps
To hear my name.

Mar. Thinkest thou still of them?
They love thee not.

Pal. Not?

Mar. Nay; the thousandth part
Of my love dealt among them were enough
To make each man a hero. Now they are brave
Only to cheer thee on: and I that love thee,
And love but thee, shall lose thee.

Pal. Have better faith,
All will be well.

Mar. Pray heaven it be.

Pal. O, Margaret,
Speak not so sadly: I would have thee brave
To cheer me on as they. Last night I dreamed
That thou hadst turned against me.

Mar. What, Giovanni?

Pal. Thou didst deride me.

Mar. I deride thy dream.
Pal. I thought I failed, and lost thy love.
Mar. O, faithless,
That could not lose my love. If thou succeed
Or fail, 'tis one. But tell me, giv'st thou heed
To visions? Are they not a fickle fabric,
Distorted fancies of the spirit, intruding
By night in memory's darkened cell? Or holdst thou
They come from heaven?
Pal. Ay. Talk not of them now.
Let me not think of it.—
Mar. See here the flowers
I have plucked. Know'st thou, Giovanni, why they grow?
Pal. How meanest thou?
Mar. Why in one place one flower
Will grow, and not another.
Pal. Canst thou tell?
Mar. The spirits of good men, allowed to wander
After their death about the mortal sites
Where once they dwelt, there where they love to rest
Shed virtue on the soil, as doth a ray
Of sunlight: but the immortal qualities
By which their races differ, as they once
Differed in blood alive, with various power
Favour the various vegetable germs

With kindred specialty. This herb, I think,
Grows where the Greek hath been. Its beauty shows
A subtle and full knowledge, and betrays
A genius of contrivance. Seest thou how
The fading emerald and azure blent
On the white petals are immeshed about
With delicate sprigs of green? 'Tis therefore called
Love-in-a-mist.

Pal. Who is this thistle here?

Mar. O, he, with plumèd crest, springing all armed
In steely lustre, and erect as Mars,
That is the Roman.

Pal. Find the Saracen.

Mar. This hot gladiolus, with waving swords
And crying colour.

Pal. And this marigold?

Mar. That is the Norman: nay, his furious blood
Blazes the secret. 'Tis said where'er he roamed
This flower is common; but 'tis in those climes
Where he wrought best it wears the strongest hue,
And so with us 'tis bravest.

Pal. And that's thy countryman!
Dost thou know Greek?

Mar. My father ever spoke it;
And Manuel made me study in it, because
Their learning was the best.

Pal. And yet their books
Were little thought of till great Frederick's time,—
The infidel.

Mar. Was he an infidel?

Pal. He loved their heathen books and mocked the Pope:
And brought into his court a Scottish wizard,
Who trafficked with the devil.—See, Margaret;
Their courts are all alike. Here is the letter
Fat Blasco writes me. He betrays his master
For those few coins thou gav'st me in thy bag.
[*Mar. takes letter.*
Gold goeth in at any gate but heaven's.
Ay, 'tis his writing, tho' it be not signed.
It tells how Hugo would escape by ship,
And how to intercept him.

Enter hastily a Brigand.

BRIGAND.

Captain, a word.

Pal. Speak, Roger.

Brig. 'Tis for thee, captain, alone.

Pal. I am alone, this lady is as I.
What is't?

Brig. Thou biddest?

Pal. Speak, man, by heav'n!

Brig. Our men
Are all betrayed. They were in dark of night
Closely surrounded at their several trysts
By Hugo's soldiers; bound, and taken to prison.
Pal. O, Christ! my dream.
Mar. (*aside*). Now, well done, Livio!
Done like a man.
Pal. Thou say'st all taken?
Brig. All.
Mar. (*aside*). I fear joy will betray me.
Pal. It cannot be
They are all betrayed.
Brig. As many as had assembled
At the ten trysts were taken.
Pal. Who hath done it?
(*To Mar.*) Take courage, dearest.
Mar. Ay, ay.
Pal. Nay, thou'rt pale.
Mar. I thought that I should faint. (*To Pal. aside.*)
O, fly, Giovanni!
Fly now with me! thou see'st this game is lost.
Pal. Be still awhile. (*To Brigand.*) And where wert thou?
Brig. In the city,
From house to house.
Pal. What say they there?

Brig. This tale
I heard. 'Tis told that 'mongst our men was one
Of Benedettu's band, who, being engirt,
Stabbed himself to the heart. Some cried thereon
That he was the betrayer. There are others
Who dare the thought I would not breathe if thou
Couldst think I thought it.
Pal. Hold! I know, I see.
All hath been like to build it. Who is with thee?
Brig. Three, and the boy Federigo.
Pal. Go to the hut:
There I will join you. [*Exit Brigand.*
Margaret, fare thee well
Now for some time. This most untoward treason
Demands my care. Lucia is not far.
Mar. What wilt thou do?
Pal. Whatever may be done:
Trust me.
Mar. O, while thou'rt safe, Giovanni, fly.
I claim thy promise. Remember it: thou wilt see
If I deride thee. We will make this ill
Our perfect good.
Pal. It cannot be. It cannot.
Mar. What wilt thou do?
Pal. I know not. Thou remain.
I will go see these men, and send thee word.

Farewell. [*Exit.*

Mar. O, I had betrayed myself but that my fear
Took other pretext. Ah! well done, well done!
The ruffians caught—Giovanni safe, and mine;
Giovanni mine. Ah, Messer Squarcialupu,
And all your gang. Lucia, ho, Lucia! [*Calling.*
Yet will I have them treated well. Ay, now,
Manuel must know. No drop of their base blood
Shall stain my hand. Lucia!

Enter Lucia.

LUCIA.

Here I am.

Mar. The men are caught, Lucia; all goes well.
There's none to steal Giovanni from me now.
We go to Rome. But first I must see Manuel.

Lu. I pray he take all kindly.

Mar. I fear him not.
Giovanni promised, should this venture fail,
To sail to Rome.

Lu. And I? shall I to Rome?

Mar. See, see! who is it, that gallops down the hill?
Why, 'tis Giovanni!

Lu. Where, my lady, where?

Mar. See'st thou not by the firs?

Lu. I hear the hoofs,

But cannot see the rider.

Mar. There he goes:
Now on the road.

Lu. I see him.

Mar. Look, Lucia;
That is his horse.

Lu. Maybe a messenger
He mounts for speed. He rides to Monreale.

Mar. Now we shall see. Nay, nay: he turns to the left.
He's for Palermo: and 'tis he, 'tis he,
Giovanni.

Enter the Brigand with a letter.

Brig. A letter for the lady, from the captain.
[*Gives and stands aside.*

Mar. Give 't me. I faint. Lucia, take it, read it.
Look! Read it me. I cannot see. The letters dance.

Lu. (*reading*).

Margaret, there's but one course. My men suspect me.
Of those who held this secret, I alone
Was absent. Manuel's shelter, my escape,
Thy presence here, all point alike at me.
I could not say farewell! When thou hast this
I am gone. I ride to join my men in prison.

Mar. Ah! ah! I knew it, I knew it! what have
I done? [*Sinks down.*

Lu. Mistress, my dearest mistress!

ACT · IV

SCENE · 1

The hall in Manuel's house: it is hung with black. PHILIP and LIVIO; the latter dressed in black, at a desk.

PHILIP.

ARGUE not with me, Livio: Manuel's death
Lies at my door. This last catastrophe
Followed on his disgrace, which I was main
To bring about.

LIVIO.

But since his guilt was clear,
Your deed was honourable.

Ph. I am not sure.
I was too hasty. How can I quit myself
In the ill I have done thy sister?

Liv. Her fever, duke,
Cannot be laid to you.

Ph. 'Twas the three shocks
Following so fast. Manuel's disgrace, and then
My suit urged out of time, and last his death:
'Twill be no wonder if her mind give way.

Liv. Please heaven it pass. I never thought she loved him
So well.

Ph. Nor I, be sure. Where is that Blasco?

Liv. He went to gather what the sailors know
Of Manuel's end.

Ph. No hope but that he's drowned.
I go now to the palace. Should I meet
With Blasco, it may be I shall detain him. [*Going.*

Liv. Ah!

Ph. He has lied to me.

Liv. If there be better tidings
Of Constance, send them hither.

Ph. Indeed I will.
Is there no news of Margaret?

Liv. Not a word. [*Exit Philip.*
She knows I am here, no doubt: but when she hears
Of Manuel's death she must return.—I think
That when her brother lived to do his worst,
My suit had fairer chance.

Enter Blasco.

Well, count, what news?

BLASCO.

Excellent.—Manuel was drowned, drowned like a dog.
I have seen the captain of the ship that 'scaped.

He tells that, putting forth at night, they kept
Their course till dawn, when in a fog they drave
On the French fleet, some two-and-twenty sail.
Of our five vessels three were taken: one,
His own, escaped, and the other—that's the one
On which sailed Manuel—by a tall ship,
Which flew the admiral's pennon, was run down,
And sunk in sight.

Liv. The news will please my father,
As it doth thee. For me 'tis ruin: my hope
I might please Margaret working for her brother
Is gone. Now will she hate me more than ever.

Bl. You never could have won her while he lived.

Liv. Well, take these papers. There are here the orders
For the execution of Palicio
To-morrow, in the public square, at noon.
See them in proper hands. They need a seal.

Bl. 'Twill be a pleasure. 'Twas the kindest freak,
This self-surrender.

Liv. He was strangely dashed,
Looking for Manuel, to find me here.

Bl. He'll find that friend no more.

Liv. Take them and go.
And for the present, count, avoid the duke:
He is angry with thee. [*Exit Blasco.*

I shall not leave this house
Till I be sure Margaret means not to come.
The unkindest tempers are broke down by grief:
And since she cannot blame me, she may find
Comfort in my compassion,—ay, and thank me
For some consideration.—She will see
I have put on black, and set the house in mourning,
Have ordered mass, have had his room shut up . . .
Is there now nothing more? Why, who is this?

Enter Margaret, throwing off a veil.

MARGARET.

Livio! thou here! Where is my brother?

Liv. Oh!
Margaret!

Mar. Where is my brother? I am come
To speak with him. Where is he?

Liv. Hast thou heard nothing?

Mar. Heard what? Where is he?

Liv. O, if thou knowest not . .

Mar. What is it? speak. Why is the house in black?
What means it? say.

Liv. Nay, let it not be me
To tell thee.

Mar. Thinkest thou my fancy's horror
Is gentler than thy bluntest tale? Speak quickly.

Liv. 'Twas on his own confession of connivance
In John Palicio's shelter and escape,
My father put him from his place, and sent him
To answer to this charge before the king.
He sailed two nights ago. The ship . . .

Mar. Go on, sir!

Liv. Our ships fell in with the enemy, and all
But two were captured, one on which he sailed,
And one which brought the news.

Mar. And Manuel's ship?

Liv. 'Tis said the ship on which he sailed was sunk.

Mar. (*falling on a chair*). Sunk, say you, and he? . . .

Liv. My sister at the tidings straight fell ill,
And her mind wanders. Bear a braver heart.

Mar. O, fatal day. 'Tis I, 'tis I have done it.—
And did none see him?

Liv. Margaret, dearest Margaret,
Take courage. I have shared thy sorrow, Margaret:
Cannot I comfort thee? O, sweetest Margaret,
Thou dost not know my love.

Mar. (*standing, and showing the dagger*). Away! away!

Liv. Nay, wherefore treat me thus?

Mar. Is this an hour
To force thy love upon me?

Liv. Margaret,
Hast thou no pity?

Mar. Think if I have pity
To spend on thee.
Liv. If thou wouldst slay me, Margaret,
Thou need'st no dagger.
Mar. Sir, stand back, I say:
And first tell plainly what thou knowest. One ship
Of three escaped?
Liv. The hindmost 'twas, that fled . .
Mar. And brought the tidings?
Liv. Ay.
Mar. And was none saved
Out of the ship which sunk?
Liv. I know not.
Mar. Know'st not?
There's hope, thank God. And thou!—Why, if in thy heart
Lurked the least feeling, 'twould have shewn this side,
Not leapt to the worst . . . Come, sir, I'll keep this sorrow:
'Tis not with thee I'd share my fear for Manuel . . .
Nor any other; tho' my need compels me,
If thou'rt the man sits in his place.
Liv. I am.
Mar. He would have aided me.
Liv. But I will aid thee
More than a brother. Thou canst ask no favour

I will not grant.

Mar. Sir, I shall ask no favour:
Nor aught but what it is thy part to grant,
Unless it be promise of secrecy.

Liv. O, but one secret with thee! there's no jewel
In all the world I would esteem as that.

Mar. Where's Giovanni Palicio, sir?

Liv. Palicio!

Mar. Ay, he's my kinsman.

Liv. He is in the palace dungeon,
Awaiting death.

Mar. He's my near kinsman, Livio,
And must not die: and, being condemned to die,
I, as his kinswoman, desire a pass
To visit him in prison when I choose. [*Livio writes.*
My purpose with him is to extort a pledge
That he will leave the country, on which condition
I look for his release.

Liv. Here is the order.
And use it as thou wilt.

Mar. (*taking*). I thank you for it.

Liv. If 'tis so near thee he go quit, what means
Better than mine to work it?

Mar. I have means.

Liv. With whom?

Mar. I have the means.

Liv. Believe it not.
There's none could win this favour of my father.
Hath not his cry been *Death to Hugo*?
He's more than rebel. There's a private hate
Which makes his sentence grateful.
Mar. I have means.
Liv. 'Twere easier wouldst thou trust me. See, 'tis done
Without more words. Margaret, I'll risk this thing
For thee. Palicio shall escape to Spain,
To Naples, where thou wilt, if thou . . .
Mar. If what?
Liv. Margaret, accept my love.
Mar. O, Livio,
I am too sad to be angry with thee now.
But know if ever thou wouldst merit love
By generosity, thou must not beg
A bargain. 'Do this and I'll love thee,' ay,
That may be said, but not 'I'll do this thing
If thou wilt love me': and thou, Livio,
A chief justiciary!

Re-enter Blasco.

Liv. Hush, I pray thee!
Bl. The lady Margaret! We are very happy
In this return.
Mar. (*aside to Blasco*). What hadst thou of Palicio?

Bl. Ha! Sayst thou? . .

Mar. (*aside*). Meet me at the palace, count.
I have thy letter. (*To Liv.*) I see there is no place here
In my house for me. I have still a hope, and in it
Shall fortify my comfort . . . If aught is heard
I shall be with thy sister. Thou and Blasco
May serve me if ye will. [*Exit.*

Liv. What said she to you?

Bl. Art not thou too accustomed to her wit?
I bring ill news. Thy sister still is worse,
And calls for thee, and Rosso thinks 'tis well
That thou shouldst go.

Liv. Bide thou here in my place . .

Bl. Nay, I must go with thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 2

A public place. MANUEL disguised as a friar meeting ROSSO.

MANUEL.

'Tis doctor Rosso.

ROSSO.

At your service, father.

Man. May I speak with thee?
Ros. With pleasure.
Man. Stand we aside.
Hast thou forgotten me?
Ros. Nay, for I think
I have never seen thee . . . or I ask thy pardon.
Man. Now thou shouldst know me well.
Ros. Thy voice I think
I do remember.
Man. (*discovering*). Do you know me now?
Ros. Manuel! Thank God!
Man. Is it a good disguise?
Ros. Metamorphosis . . if indeed 'tis thou,
In such a husk. Then thou'rt nót drowned!
Man. Indeed,
There was a time when I had some fear to be;
But how came you to know it?
Ros. Of the ships
One returned home with news that thine was sunk.
Was not that true?
Man. Ay, ay,
Ros. How didst thou 'scape?
Man. I took my only chance, leapt overboard
And swam to the enemy. By heavenly fortune
The ship that ran us down was Raymond's, he
Who served so long with us. I had left my foes

To find old friends: and when the fight was o'er,
I told him in what hapless case I stood,
And promising to hold myself no less
His prisoner, and surrender to his master
At Naples if need were, I bade him land me
By night at Cefaledi; there arrived,
By the good sailor friars I was clad
In the disguise you see, and came in speed
To look to matters here.

Ros. There is great need.

Man. Ay, my affairs with Constance?

Ros. I grieve to tell
Constance is lying ill.

Man. She is in your hands?

Ros. Ay.

Man. Doth she doubt of me?

Ros. At your committal
A fever must have seized her. Then your death,
Which should have been concealed, was urged upon her,
In countenance of duke Philip's suit . . .

Man. How? Philip!

Ros. Did you not guess?

Man. Is't possible?

Ros. At that
Her mind gave way: 'tis question of her life.

Man. I bring the medicine to work her cure.
Is't not enough?
Ros. I trust so.
Man. And I think it.
How blind I have been! I trusted Philip, and he
Was playing against me. Time will right me, Rosso,
In this as in the other. Patience. And what
Of your affairs . .
Ros. How mine?
Man. Your love affairs.
Ros. My love affairs?
Man. Ay,—Margaret.
Ros. Margaret?
Man. Can I be wrong? Her head was turned the day
She brought you to Palicio.
Ros. O, Manuel,
This makes it sure.
Man. Yes, and I'm glad of it.
Ros. Nay, nay: pray hear me. On the very day
Palicio left your house, she went, 'twas said,
To Monreale: there she hath not been seen.
Was't to Palicio?
Man. Now, please God, thou'rt wrong.
Say, where is he?
Ros. Stranger than all, he has made
Surrender of himself to Livio,

Our new justiciary, and awaits his death
In Hugo's dungeon.

Man. How! And Margaret?

Ros. She hath now this morn returned, full of distraction
As well might be, but firm beyond her wont.
She is in the palace, where she nurses Constance
With the cool skill of one that hath his stake
Ventured elsewhere . . .

Mar. Good God! Now if thou'rt right,
Rosso, this matter needs me more than the other.
Thank heaven I am here. Constance is in thy hands:
Thou hast her cure. Yet use it with discretion,
Knowing my hazard. I shall visit at once
The archbishop; he will stand my friend, and give me
Commission in the habit of a priest
To see Palicio. Nay, there's not a moment
To lose. Thou mayst contrive that Constance too
Should send for me; maybe I thus might see her.
Farewell. I go, yet must I take a name;
Let it be Thomas, father Thomas. To-night
Can I rest at thy house?

Ros. I pray you will.

Man. An hour hence couldst thou meet me there?

Ros. I will.
God speed you.

Man. O, Rosso, Rosso, I fear thou'rt right . . .

[*Exit.*

Ros. Ay, ay. I'm right. Alas for Manuel.
'Tis almost pity he is escaped from death.
I would tell Constance, but her throbbing brain
Hath no interpreter, and in her ear
All words are meaningless, or mean alike
Something insane, which in her eager dreaming
Steals the world's place. I have no power to tell.

[*Exit.*

SCENE · 3

Room in the Palace. HUGO and PHILIP meeting.

HUGO.

No cheer. Thy questioning looks may not be answer'd
With any brightness, duke: and yet take heart.
The fever of our climate is in the onset
Oft overmasked as this. 'Twill clear and pass.
'Twere quite incredible she should so sicken
Of mere affection. The compacted body
Hath its machinery for health and action,
Its appetites for food and rest, too firm

To be unfixed by fancy. Like a river
Our life flows on, whose surface storms may vex,
But never move the current from its bed.

PHILIP.

I heartily repent my part in this.
I wronged poor Manuel.

Hu. Now thou wrong'st me.
Him being dead thou canst not wrong. 'Tis plain
The objection falls. If once there was a motive
That might have stayed thee . . .

Ph. Nay, upbraid me not.

Hu. How, I upbraid thee?

Ph. That I pressed my suit.

Hu. Rather for slackness in it.

Ph. If she recover
'Tis all I pray for.

Hu. Not so. This will pass.
'Twill be forgotten. All will be forgotten.
Look but on Margaret, doth her brother's death
Craze her?

Ph. Indeed, I think she is nigh distracted;
And if she bear up better there's a reason:
She hath a comforter. Nay, I may tell you
I saw your doctor here take her aside,
And when he spoke, her face of woe lit up.

She loves him. 'Twas a match that Manuel wished.

Hu. Nay, nay! what! Rosso, the apothecary!

Enter Livio and Blasco.

Ah, Livio; Constance calls thy name, 'tis hoped
That she may know thee.

LIVIO.

Is she better, sire?

Hu. Nay: but she asked for thee, and Rosso said
Thou shouldst be sent for. Come within.

Ph. May I
Far as the door?

Hu. Ay, come.

BLASCO (aside to Liv.).

Tell Margaret,
Who hath some matter for me, that I am here.

[*Exeunt Hugo and Livio.*

Ph. Count, thou hast lied to me. If that suffice
To raise thy temper, meet me when thou wilt:
If not, and Constance die, I'll use thee worse. [*Exit.*

Bl. Ay, ay. No doubt there may be danger for me
Even from that quarter: but I have a foe
That threats me more. How came she by the letter?
Only Palicio and his messenger
Could know 'twas mine.

Enter Margaret.

MARGARET.

'Tis business with thee, count:
Therefore few words. I have thy treasonous letter
And other proofs, which I shall bring against thee
Unless thou do my bidding.

Bl. What is that,
My lady Peremptory? speak thy will.

Mar. Attend. Palicio is condemned to die
At noon to-morrow. I require that thou
Contrive that he escape, ay, and go clear
Three hours before that time.

Bl. Impossible.

Mar. 'Tis not so, count. For Livio had promised me
The very thing; but since his price exceeds
What I need pay to thee . . .

Bl. My price, how mean you?

Mar. I will give back thy letter to thy hands,
And promise secrecy in every matter
I had against thee.

Bl. Give me now the letter,
And I will do it.

Mar. Nay. Thou'lt do it first.

Bl. Then say that if at nine to-morrow morn
I have a friendly guard—

Mar. Keep to that hour:
'Twill do. I shall be there to see it done.
I'll bring the letter with me. I can provide
His further safety. If thou fail, the enquiry,
Which I can set on foot, delays his death,
Till I find other means.
Bl. But still I see not
My own security.
Mar. Thou hast my promise:
And thy security is only this,
To keep to thine. I go. Remember, nine. [*Exit.*
Bl. Wheu! wheu! Who hath the secret now?
Indeed,
I see this dainty lady hath a lover
We little dreamed of. Therefore was he housed
With Manuel. O, Giovann Palicio:
Thus Livio's rival. And thou blab of me
To mistress Margaret, dost thou? well, well, well!
I'll see thee die for that. Die now thou must.
I have, sir, but to tell this tale in the ear
Of the chief justiciary, and I am saved.

Re-enter Livio.

Livio, thou hast a rival.
Liv. I know.
Bl. Thou knowest?

Liv. My father saith Margaret will marry Rosso.

Bl. Rosso! Rosso be hanged! 'Tis John Palicio.

Liv. Palicio!

Bl. Yes, Palicio.

Liv. Nay.

Bl. I'll tell thee.

Hark.—Was he not concealed in Manuel's house?

Liv. Well?

Bl. And escaping from his house by night,
The next day where was Margaret?

Liv. Ah!

Bl. And then

'Twas she betrayed the rebels.

Liv. Eh!

Bl. We traced
The little book to her servant.

Liv. That's against it.

Bl. Nay: it explains why all the names were there,
Only not his.

Liv. But then . . nay, why should he
Surrender?

Bl. That's but madness any way.
But now she comes demanding his deliverance.

Liv. Ay, she doth. O, the villain! he shall die.

Bl. He shall; but hark, I have promised Margaret
To set Palicio free at nine to-morrow.

Say that we go together. Margaret comes
To see her lover freed. Her we will take
And keep confined until his execution;
Which for our purpose may be hurried on.
Or if . . .

Liv. Stay; why this promise? In the course
Of justice he must die.

Bl. Not so. My promise
To set him free was made for two good reasons.
First hearing thou hadst offered her the like:
Next for the knowledge that on my refusal
She could find other means. Beside all which
She bargains to restore me certain letters
I sent her years ago, which I confess
I am now ashamed of: (*aside.*)—Any lie will serve
To smooth this idiot.—These she brings with her,
And I can take them from her. My object gained
I hand her o'er to thee. For all her scorns
Repay her as thou wilt.

Liv. I fear her.

Bl. Nay,
I can secure thee. Come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 4

Dungeon of the Palace. PALICIO *discovered.*
A door at back of prison is L. *of centre.*

PALICIO.

I cannot think of death. Imagination
Is barren on that point, and hath no picture;—
To be so near should better prick the fancy.—
I see a grave—but stand beside the grave . . .
Nothing.—And yet I am so near.—I judge
From this how dizzily deep rides the division
'Twixt this world and the next; tho' in Time's face
'Tis thin, ay, more invisibly sharp than is
The axe's edge, which makes it.—Is our life's stuff
So different? All the joys and hopes of earth
Wrought of too coarse a fibre to invest
An inkling of that other unseen world,
Which hath this only entrance? Wherefore my mind
Wanders in wasteful contemplation back
O'er what I have done, pitifully seeking
To wear renewed the robe of those proud deeds,
To dream again her disappointed dreams;
And over all is Margaret, ever Margaret;
Floating before these vain soul-treacherous eyes,—
My tempter and tormentor.

Enter Gaoler.

GAOLER.

A priest sent from the archbishop. Shall he enter?

Pal. Yea: bid him enter. But I pray thee now,
Thou execrable minion of that devil
Who sucks our people's blood, come not thyself:
Each time I see thee I must wish to kill thee.
Thou art my soul's last peril. Keep away.

Gaoler. Whate'er I be, I can be civil, sir. [*Exit.*

Pal. Ay, I was wrong. Now must I ask his pardon.
I am not yet fit to die. Yet is't not written
"*If hand or foot offend thee, cut it off;*
If thine eye, pluck it out"? I have done all this;
Yet lurks there something in the accusing balance
Which my soul sickens at. What if I have lost
My world and soul? This good priest comes in time.

Enter Manuel disguised as priest.

Father, if thou be come to shrive my soul,
I need thee sorely.

MANUEL.

I am here for that.

Pal. There's comfort in thy face. I have much to tell.
Thou know'st me, who I am?

Man. Ay, son.
Pal. I pray
What said the archbishop of me?
Man. Pause not now
To ask and weigh man's judgment, who so soon
Must answer to the Judge of all.
Pal. Nay, nay.
If thou bring hither such a thought of me,
What can I tell thee? How shall I begin?
Man. If there be any one thing on your mind,
More than another, which now brings you shame,
Begin with that.
Pal. Ay: such a thing there is.
Man. What is't?
Pal. 'Tis the story of the mischief,
Which makes me need thee; which hath sent me here.
For I was single-hearted, single-eyed,
As thou or any of the saints, who hold
Their place in heaven secure, three days ago,—
But three days: If thou then hadst come to me
I should have said, My sins are all forgiven;
I only beg of thee the heavenly bread
To be my passport to my home prepared.
My earthly sword hath won a heavenly crown.
I have not left undone aught, save where God's will
Forbade accomplishment, and if I have done

Aught unpermitted 'twas in zeal's excess.
My errors are the saints'—three days ago . .
And now my boast is gone, my soul is stained.
Hark, while I tell. Satan, who saw me thus
Pure-hearted and elect, an envied prey,
Used all his skill to take me: Ay, he came
And showed me, in the room where I lay sick,
Wounded, and weak and faint, a beauteous woman,
And all love's world. He said, *Take this*; but I
Was ready awhile, and answered, *Not for me.*
I thread the narrow way; I climb at heaven.
If I touch this, I perish. But he said,
Not so, 'tis thy due prize. Take it, Palicio!
'Twas the old tale—"Thou shalt not surely die."
I took it. God deserted me that hour:
My friends suspected me: all things went ill:
And now . . .

Man. Stay. First, this woman, who misled you,
Is she your wife?

Pal. Nay, 'tis but now three days . . .

Man. You say she is not your wife. Is then your sin
To have leapt the bounds which hold unmarried lovers?

Pal. O, father, thou couldst never ask such thing
If thou didst know who 'twas. Nay, thou mayst know:
'Twas Manuel's sister,—Margaret of Palermo.

Man. (*partly discovering*). See, I am Manuel. * * *
* * * Ay, and so far is well.
Now say, did Margaret contrive thy flight?
Pal. . . . (*assents*).
Man. And after followed thee to Monreale?
And met thee on the hills?
Pal. . . . (*assents*).
Man. Then tell me now
Why hast thou left her?
Pal. Nay. Question me not.
Man. Why hast thou left her?
Pal. Why come to me thus?
I needed but a priest to comfort me,
And show me on death's road: thou drag'st me back
To torture me. Thou canst not understand.
Man. Thou ow'st to me more than to any priest,
Who for thy sake might hear, to tell me true.
Why hast thou left her?
Pal. If thou wert a priest,
Then wouldst thou see how well the stalking fiend
Snared for my soul. I planned for yesternight
To storm the palace: and I had promised Margaret
To make no further venture if that failed,
But sail with her to Rome and there be married,
Using thy interest to reclaim my rank.
But on the day I gave that word, my men

Were all betrayed, taken, and led to prison.
I was with Margaret, as well they knew:
My love for her, my shelter at thy house,
My flight permitted, set them on the thought
That I had been corrupted, was the traitor.
Fly with me, then cried Margaret. Ay, the fiend too
Said, *Fly: go safe*. I foiled him. I came here.
That was my only answer.
Man. And didst thou not
Betray them?
Pal. I! Palicio! when did I
Betray?
Man. Stay, while in turn I shew to thee
Another tale made of the self-same matter.—
A price set on thy head, pursued by justice,
Bleeding to death, thou camest to my house
Asking for shelter, begging but for life.
I gave it at my risk,—how great that risk
I'll shew thee soon;—there at my house my sister
Secretly tended thee, and won thy cure.
Thou in return didst, all unknown to me,
Obtain her love, and use it to break trust,
Flying by stealth at night: and then, being fled,
Didst scruple not to use thy flight, to work
The very thing for which thy life was owed.
Further, when that went wrong, merely for fear

Men should think ill of thee, thou didst desert
Her, to whose love was due that thou wert free;
Wronging her then again, as me before . . .
Pal. Manuel, forbear; thee I confess I wronged:
For the rest thy taunts are vain.
Man. Wait: there is more.—
Thy refuge being discovered, I was charged
With treason, and in course shipped hence for Spain.
My ship was sunk, and I, but for God's mercy,
Drowned. My disgrace and rumoured death so wrought
On Constance, that she lies in life's last hope.
To all of us thou hast done unmeasured ill:
What is thy plea?
Pal. Though God himself should curse me,
My purpose hath been good.
Man. Ay, that I'll grant:
Thou'rt for the right, but being too hot upon it
Mistakest right. Thou art numbered with the madmen
Who, thinking the whole world's unhappiness
Hangs on one string, tread all else underfoot
So they may reach to cut it.—And where's the good?
Thyself, too, in what plight, that after all
This sacrifice of others' rights, thou rushest
To die to save thine honour from a stain,

That needs no washing!

Pal. Enough: there let it end:
I die to-morrow.

Man. Nay, thou must escape:
Retrieve all that thou canst. I now shall go
To Margaret, whom before I feared to meet.
She will be working for thee. If she fail,
The archbishop yet hath power to stay thy death
Till I can serve thee. If thy love for her,
And hers for thee abide, you must be married.
Nay, all she urged was good.

Pal. O, 'tis impossible.
Work not for my escape: 'tis best I die.

Man. Nay, nay. Thou that canst fight, fight with thyself.
The brave despair that fear not: that's the shock
The strongest suffer. Thou wast ill of late;
Wert thou now strong, shame would not crush thy spirit. [*Going.*

Pal. Manuel, go not!

Man. Yes, I must go. Remember
My name is Father Thomas. None must guess
Who hath been with thee.—Farewell. Fight with thyself,
Palicio, with thyself. Thou shalt be saved. [*Exit.*

ACT · V

SCENE · 1

The same. *PALICIO as before.*

PALICIO.

THREE hours have fully passed since first I marked
Yon grated hole grow rosy, and exchange
Moonlight for dawn. Now soon will Margaret come:
And I must go forth to the world disgraced,
To fly my country or hide: ay, at the cue
Of the chief justiciary, led by a woman.
Hast thou the heart, Giovann Palicio,
To call this freedom. Nay, since thy right hand
Was raised 'gainst wrong in vain, and thou thyself
Art charged with wrong, and must admit the wrong,
Were't not now best to end, and shroud thy fortune
In veils of death? Thou that hast led the people,
Hast thou a knee for favours? Will thy tongue
Confess I wronged thee, Manuel, I come forth
To be thy prisoner: and I wronged thee, Margaret:

I will come forth to be thy pensioner?
Shame: rather would I die.

Enter Margaret.

MARGARET.

'Tis I, Giovanni: all is well: thou'rt safe,
Manuel has told me all. Thou dost repent.
All is prepared. Ask not my pardon: give me
One kiss—I have forgiven thee. Be not sad.
'Twas like thee as I love thee, nobly done:
And being so cruel to thyself 'twas easy
Thou shouldst forget what I too now forget,
Recovering thee. I saw thee ride away,
And guessed before the letter. O, Giovanni,
Thank God, thou'rt safe. Look, I have brought the money
To serve thee on thy journey till the day
We meet again; and more. Thy ship will sail
But to Messina: there thou wilt disbark.
Nay, take the money; thou wilt need it, love,
'Tis Manuel's gift, not mine.

Pal. (*taking*). I have no heart,
Margaret, for what is done on my behalf.
I thank him, but . . .

Mar. Alas, alas! Giovanni:
I looked to find thee glad of heart and happy.

Our troubles all are over. Manuel lives,
Whom we thought drowned: Constance, who lay in death,
Hath risen from her bed: and even our marriage
Is furthered by my brother. How can it be
Thou art so dismal, and thy kiss as cold
As is this prison?

Pal. I would not leave this prison.

Mar. Thou wouldst not leave it?

Pal. No: dankness and darkness
Are now my friends. I have failed. How can I wish
To step in the light of heaven?

Mar. O, then I see
This death-delivering dungeon hath o'ercome thee.
——There's news. This morn the ships arrived from Spain.
They must bring tidings of the king's accession.
We shall learn all to-day. When he's proclaimed,
There's nought that thou couldst do if thou wert free.
What thou hast done may have determined much.

Pal. When shall I hear of it?

Mar. Love, thou must sail
Quickly and secretly: and canst not hear
Until thou come to land. But then if I
Should meet thee there with Manuel, oh, what joy,
Could I be first to tell thee.

Pal. Dost thou think
That Manuel hath forgiven me for the wrong
I did him, stealing from his house by night?
Mar. That was my theft, Giovanni; and he forgives:
Cry not thou forfeit.—See, I bring thy dagger.
Pal. But, Margaret, I wronged thee too. I fled
From thee; canst thou forgive me?
Mar. Ask not me
If I have forgiven. Hearken, I will tell thee,—
This dagger is the dagger which the woman,
Whose name thou didst not know, brought thee in prison:
By help of this thou madest thy first escape.
'Tis I that bring it now. These two days past,
These days of misery, I have held and worn it
But for one purpose; that if thou shouldst die,
I might have something which had once been thine
To end my life with.
Pal. Thou!
Mar. Ay. I had promised
This caseless blade my empty heart for sheath.
Pal. Margaret!
Mar. Now take it. I have better hope.
[*Palicio takes dagger, and puts it in his breast.*
Thou shouldst be armed.

Pal. And thou hast thought of death?
Mar. Only if thou hadst died.
Pal. O, Margaret,
Margaret, I am not worthy of thy love.
Thou seest I am not. Look how poor a heart
I bring to take thee: 'tis too base. I thought
I loved thee overmuch. Now, fool, I see
I love too little.
Mar. 'Tis this hateful prison
Hath chilled thy spirits. When again thou'rt free
Thou'lt be Giovanni.
Pal. Canst thou love me so?
Mar. O, what hath come to thee? Did I not love
The hour I bound thy wound: the day I brought
Rosso to heal thee, and led thee by the hand,
Threading the blindest midnight silently,
To set thee free? Dost thou forget?
Pal. But then,
Then I was brave, a leader of the people
Against their tyrant: thou didst hold of me
As of a hero: now I have failed, I am shamed.
Mar. O no, Giovanni; thou mistakest sadly
My love for thee.
Pal. I am no more myself.
Mar. Then dare I prove to thee how much I love thee,

How little thy renown. Remember, thou didst scheme
To burn the palace.

Pal. Ay.

Mar. Didst thou not promise
Me, trembling for thy life, that if that failed,
Thou wouldst to Rome with me?

Pal. My scheme miscarried:
I broke my promise.

Mar. The cause of that miscarriage
Was the betrayal?

Pal. How should I forget?

Mar. Now wilt thou say I love but thy success?
'Twas I betrayed thy men.

Pal. Ha! thou was't! was't thou?
(*Leaping up from Margaret, who staggers against the wall.*)
From me, sorceress, thou viper, go from me! 2480
Traitress, was't thou? Thou wast my secret curse!
Sent by the devil, wast thou, to destroy me,
To kill my soul? And bringest now thy money
[*Strews it about.*
To buy thy happiness: and of thy love
Pratest, and sayst, *Come forth with me!* With thee?
Rather all deaths, a thousand deaths of shame,—
The axe, the gallows. O, my faithful men,
My brave men! and for them!—Ah! I will love
My executioner more than thee. Love thee!

There is not any tyrant or crowned fiend
Whom I will hate like thee.

Mar. Then kill me, Giovanni.

[*Swoons falling.*

Pal. (*taking out dagger*). This dagger in my heart, and I am avenged.

Nay, nay, O God, I am adding wrong to wrong.

[*Putting dagger back.*

And Manuel. Alas! what have I done?

[*Runs to Margaret.*

I spake too roughly, Margaret; I was angry:
I knew not what I said. Margaret, I am sorry.
Forgive me, Margaret. Na, I meant it not.
I am not angry with thee now. I think
I can forgive thee. Hear me! She doth not hear me.
She doth not breathe. Her eyes are fixed and sightless.
Her hands are cold.
My God, oh, if I have killed her! Margaret, Margaret!
Dost thou not hear?—I have killed her.—Margaret!
I do forgive thee. I forgive thee all.
O God, she is dead, she is dead.—Now if I kiss her,
If she can feel (*kissing*). She stirs. O, Margaret,
Hear me. I do forgive thee all.

Mar. Giovanni:
I did it for thy love.

Pal. Thank God, thank God.
Now thou dost breathe and speak. O, I was cruel;
I was too angry.—Margaret, forgive me.
Kiss me, forgive. [*Noise at door.*

Mar. Hark, at the door they come;
'Tis now thy time to fly.

Pal. How can I leave thee?
I cannot thus.

Enter Blasco with sword drawn, Livio and two soldiers.

Mar. Go for thy life, Giovanni:
Fly, fly: think not of me!

BLASCO.

Stay, not so fast,
You pretty pair of loving turtle-doves,
Cooing your sweet farewells in such a cote;
We shall not separate you yet so far.

Mar. Ah me!

Pal. What means this insult?

Bl. Forward, fellows.
Take ye the lady to the cell I shewed,
And bind her arms.

Pal. Who dares?

Bl. Fool, stand aside!
Seest thou my sword?

Pal. Ho! villain, die!
Bl. God! I am slain. [*Falls.*
Pal. And thou, Thinking to find me here unarmed, go thou!
Soldier. Ah! [*Dies . . the rest fly.*
Pal. Two are escaped.

Palicio springs on Blasco suddenly, and stabs him with dagger in his left. Seizing Blasco's sword in his right, which he has disengaged from the sling, he kills another with that; and when the rest fly is left standing with a bloody weapon in each hand.

Mar. And one was Livio.
Pal. What means this damnable design?
Mar. Giovanni,
I see, I know. Fly now—take thou the sword.
Give me the dagger. Follow. I know the way.
There will be none to stay thee. If there be,
Serve them as Blasco. Come, come; follow quickly.
[*Exit.*
Pal. (*following*). Margaret, Margaret. [*Exit.*

SCENE · 2

Room in the Palace. MANUEL, disguised as priest, meeting ROSSO.

ROSSO.

In good time, Manuel: welcome. All is well.

MANUEL.

Thank God. And doth she know?

Ros. Ay, thou shalt hear.
'Twas Margaret's doing: all night long she sat
By Constance' bed, and there with gentlest presence
And soft accustomed voice most gradually
She soothed and won the wandering spirit back.
But, oh, the sweetest skill!—she, as she saw
Constance take note of her, made no discovery,
But spoke of thee and all things else, as if
There never had been change: and that so well,
That Constance, who lay gazing on the wall,
And questioning of her error, whence it grew,
Soon laid it on herself, and by and by
Told Margaret of her dream, and asked how long
She had lain so sick in bed; nor ever learned

How real had her woe been, till she knew
That all was over.

Man. I thank God,—and thee,
Rosso, thee too. Margaret has had some cause
To blame herself,—to have helped in the repair
Will ease her heart of much. May I see Constance?

Ros. At once. But come prepared to find her weak.

Enter Philip.

PHILIP.

Father, a word.

Man. I pray you excuse me now.

Ph. 'Tis that I know thy errand that I ask.
I would speak through thee to the lady Constance.

Man. What would you say?

Ph. Let me be private with thee.

Man. (*to Ros.*) Doctor, I'll follow. (*Aside.*) Now to act my best. [*Exit Rosso.*

Ph. Thou seest in me the man who wrought this ill.
I'd have thee use thine office with the lady,
To win her grace, that I may make confession
Of that which burdens me.

Man. How! what is this?
What should I say?

Ph. I'll tell thee: and thou must know
First, that I once was Manuel's friend and pupil,—

My pride, alas! self-wrested to my shame—
And in those early days loved her, whom he
Should at this time have married. Five years spent
In graceless life meanwhile had far removed
My heart from my first love, nor had my thought
Once ventured back to think or wish her mine.
But, as it happened,—and being at the time
Stung by the sharp remorse of idle hours,—
Chance sent me hither, and her presence soon
Awaked those memories that I had thought were dead.
Then vainly felt I worthier than I was,
Seeing my better part desired to win
What I too surely had deserved to lose.
Constance denied me:—but now hear my crime.
I won her father's ear; and then, being lodged
In Manuel's house, I lit on a discovery
Of some suspicion, and contrived thereby—
Betraying him who was my friend and host—
His absence and disgrace: whence by ill fate
His death and all this lady's trouble sprung.

Man. 'Tis a sad tale you tell.

Ph. I was misled
To think he loved the lady less than I.
Yet urge I no excuse, nor look for pardon:
But if 'twould not add sorrow to her sorrow,
I would discharge this burden from my soul.

Man. Do so: for you shall find pity and pardon.

Ph. Nay, nay: that could not be.

Man. Though hard it seem,
Ay, and may force awhile some generous tears;
She cannot yet fail in the foremost duty
Of all that sin. I shall prepare her well.

Ph. I thank thee, father. [*Exit Manuel.*
There is in these men
A quiet strength, which shames our self-esteem.

Enter Ferdinand and Hugo with despatches.

HUGO.

Philip, we have the news. Frederick is crowned.
See, here's for thee. (*Gives a despatch.*) It bears the new king's seal.

Ph. Well, 'twill help nought. (*Opens.*)

Hu. I pray there may be nothing
That meddles with my place.

Ph. Read here, your excellence. [*Reads.*
By reason of advices late received,
The king's commands are that the sealed despatch
Writ for emergency be now held valid,
And put in force by you.

Hu. Where's the despatch?

FERDINAND.

'Tis in my keeping.

Hu. (*to Philip*). Know'st thou its contents?
Ph. Nay, sir; not I.
Hu. Pray let us see it, straight.
Ph. Adjourn we to my secretary's chamber:
A moment will discover it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE · 3

Reception-room at the Palace. As first scene of first act.
CONSTANCE, ROSSO, and MANUEL disguised.

CONSTANCE.

Nay, I can walk. I am very well. See, Manuel,
There's no one here: thou mayst be Manuel
Yet awhile. Is not this, love, a recovery
To make the memories of sickness glad?
The days seem years since I stood here. But now
Must I see Philip?

MANUEL.

Be kind to him, Constance.
The self-condemned need more than full forgiveness
Ere they forgive themselves.
Con. I am too happy
To be unkind. And where is Margaret?

I long to rally her about her lover.
Sweet Margaret caught: Margaret who mocked us all.
Hath she not chosen a madcap brother for us?
Man. Well, I had wished for Rosso, love; but women
Favour strange fellows.

ROSSO.

She was difficult
To win, and now at least she has met her match.
Man. I pray all may go well. Indeed I have hope
That Hugo is by this possessed of orders
Which will resolve all trouble.
Con. Hush, father Thomas;
See, here they come.

Enter Hugo, Philip, Livio, and Ferdinand.

HUGO.

My dearest daughter, 'tis a happy day.
Thy health and safety—Ay, I am glad to see
Thy face of happiness, and I can add
Now to thy joy. King Frederick is crowned,
And I shall rule in Sicily.
Man. (*aside*). How is this?
Con. Then for this happy news grant me, dear father,

One favour. Philip here will join in asking.

PHILIP.

Ere it be asked, I wish before all here
To say some words. Good father, hast thou won
The lady's ear for me?

Man. I have, your grace.

Ph. May I speak, Constance?

Con. Philip, you may speak.

Ph. Once I asked this, and thou didst bid me then
Speak and end all. Hear while I speak my last.
I have wronged thee, Constance.

Con. That is now forgiven.

Hu. O, well done, Constance.

Ph. And I wronged Manuel.
I violated friendship, and the bond
Of hospitality.

Con. All that I know,
And all forgive.

Hu. Forgive him, and forget it.
So should it be.

Ph. Yet if thou sayest that,
Thou dost not know that 'twas my treachery
Procured his exile, whence ensued his death.

Con. All this I know, and I forgive it all.

Hu. (*aside*). This is too soft. Doth her mind wander still?

Ph. Thou understandest? Knowest thou that did he live
To-day he were the ruler of his country?

Con. Nay; now, sir, this is new. How came you by it?

Ph. In a despatch I hold, his full appointment
Is writ and sealed.

Con. He will be very glad
To hear of this.

Ph. What sayst thou, then?

Hu. (*aside*). O misery!

Con. I know you call him dead; but still to me
He makes his visitations. I have seen him
This morning in my chamber. Nay, I say,
I see him now.

Hu. What saith she? (*To Livio.*) Alas, alas!
Thy sister's mind is gone. This was the reason
Of her strange cheerfulness.

Ph. May God forgive us
Our fatal mischief.

Con. Give me the despatch:
I'll shew it him, sirs, else he might not believe me:
But if I take it . . .

Ph. (*to Hu.*). What, sir, shall I do?

Ros. Humour her fancy, I will lead her out.

Hu. Ferdinand, give it to her. Alas, alas!

Con. (*taking*). I thank thee, sir. (*To Man.*) Now, father, here's a matter
To make us laugh within.

[*Exeunt Rosso, Constance, and Manuel.*

Hu. Philip, she is mad.

Ph. I see it, and I the cause.

Hu. A laughing idiot. O, cruel heavens,
Ye had no stroke more fearful. Would to God
That Manuel yet were living, tho' I hate him,
Rather than this.

[*Shouting without of "Palicio," etc.*]

What noise is that?

LIVIO.

The rebels, sir, again.

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

The city, sire, is risen; and the people,
With John Palicio at their head, demand
The king's despatches.

Hu. John Palicio!
Is he escaped again? Send Blasco hither.
Livio, where is he?

Liv. Sir, I do not know.

Hu. 'Tis this accursed rebellion hath done all:
I have been too merciful. I tell thee, Philip,
That was the cause of all, of Constance's madness,
Of Manuel's death. By heaven, the sword shall fall.
I will have blood for blood, and wail for wail.
None of these villains whom I hold in prison
Shall see the sunset. Send me Blasco hither.
Call out the troops.

Ph. Pray you remember, sire,
Pardon to all is urged in the despatch.

Hu. Send pardon to the devil. Oppose me not!
I'll teach these rebels I am master now.

[*Cries heard without.*

Enter Manuel (as himself, with paper in hand) and Constance. Margaret, Lucia, and Rosso following.

Manuel! why, Manuel!

Ph. O, Manuel,
My friend, I am saved.

Con. My father,
Let me present to you my ghostly father;
And at your will my loving living husband.

Hu. Why, what! How's this? Is't thou? Is this a trick?

Man. Ay: but a trick of fortune. Let my escape,

Which makes you wonder, be explained hereafter.
But now, since here I hold my title, sire,
I'll fill my place at once. Philip, I pray thee
Go to the window, and make known to all
These latest tidings. Send the people home.
[*Philip goes to window.*
Meanwhile, sir; if before thou hadst some warrant
For anger shewn against me, now I ask
Thy pardon; and for wrongs against me done
Assure thee, that if freely thou make over
Thy daughter for my wife, there is in my love
Means for full reconcilement. May I say
Constance is mine?
Hu. I see that she is thine.
Man. I pray thou never shalt regret this day.
Ph. (*returning from window*). There is John Palicio,
with half the town
At their old cries. I can make nothing of him.
Man. Bid him surrender as my prisoner.
I will receive him here.
Hu. Thou must not think
He comes at asking thus.
Man. He will obey.
But I will shew myself. [*Goes to window.*
Hu. How comes he out of prison?

MARGARET.

That I can tell.
Your secretary Blasco promised me,
Who desired nothing more than the release
Of John Palicio, that he would contrive
To free him, if on my part I returned
A certain letter to his hands, wherein, [*Shewing.*
As you may read, he had betrayed your person
To John Palicio for a price. Then I,
As holder of this written ransom, came
To see my kinsman freed; when in the dungeon
False Blasco, with two villains and another,
Who was your son, appeared before us armed:
And thinking there to find Palicio
Defenceless, would have slain him, and forced me
To give them back this writing: but Palicio
Sprang up, slew Blasco, and escaped.

Ph. His death
Was due from me.

Hu. Give me the letter, pray.
Say, Livio, is this true?

Liv. I never knew
Of this betrayal, sir; I trusted Blasco.

Mar. He counts for nothing, since he ran away.

Enter Palicio.

Hu. Is this the man?

Man. Thou art my prisoner.

PALICIO.

I make submission to your excellence.

[*Offering* (*Blasco's*) *sword.*

Man. Dost thou surrender of thy own free-will
To me, as legal viceroy of this island,
Under King Frederick, and now abjuring
Thy late rebellion, wilt thou trust henceforth
The people's welfare to my lawful hands?

Pal. I do, and all will trust thee as do I.

Man. That is thy pardon. (*Takes sword.*) For the king's good will
Is grace to all. Yet there will be for thee
Question in Blasco's death. But now I need
Elsewhere thy presence. (*Returning sword.*) Go forth to the people,
And make it known that I am their governour:
And that for all disorder ere this day
There will be pardon, but from this day none.
Bid them disperse.

Pal. Those hundred men of mine,
Who lie in prison: is their pardon granted?

Mar. 'Tis I should plead for them. 'Twas I betrayed them.

Hu. Thou didst betray them?

Mar. Ay, sir.

Hu. 'Tis nought but wonder.

Man. (*to Pal.*). This is a day of grace. None will resent
Our stretching mercy. I shall grant their pardon,
But not without some cautions; for among them—
Hear me, Palicio, thou who so dost cry
Against the taxes—many among thy men
Are a most burdensome and fruitless tax.
They go free but to work, and with such measures
As will ensure it. [*Palicio is going.*
Now, sir, ere thou goest,
Is there none here to whom a word is due?

Pal. O, Manuel, I dare not, nay,—I pray thee,
Be not too generous towards me: since my heart
Has fallen so far, let me have trial yet
That I may win what I but falsely stole,
And now would leave in thy security,
Till I may bring some right to claim it. Yet
I lack the worth to ask. But there's one thing
Which I will ask (*goes to Margaret*), forgiveness; and for that
I kneel.

Mar. I will not hide it from thee, sir,
That in the mutual interchange of pardons,
Which is our friendly game, I have had some pain

Standing out in the cold, merely for lack
Of such a suit as thine. I have looked and longed
To find a debtor; and I will take thee.
Rise, sir. I must present thee to a kinsman.
[*Leads Palicio to Hugo.*
(*To Hugo.*) Do you remember, sir, a cruel saying
Spoken to me against this gentleman?
Since that I have been his friend, ay, and yours too,
For I betrayed his people to your hands,
When they were setting forth to burn the palace;
And so prevented Blasco's treachery;
From which him too I saved, and for that deed
He takes me now in marriage.
Hu. All thou sayst
Margaret, with much of what hath happed to-day
Needs explanation. I must see so far
That Livio by his conduct is cut off:
But if you tell me now that you will marry
This man . . .
Man. Palicio is of noble blood,
My lord. Yourself have given him oft such praise
As by an enemy must be well deserved
Ere it be spoken. The king's pardon proves
Justification: he is quit of treason.
We shall restore his rank, the loss of which,
Due to his grandsire in the civil wars,

Brings him no stain: nay, we shall further make him
Chief secretary, where his ancient zeal
For all the commons' rights may still be shewn.
Con. Margaret, we may be married the same day.
Hu. I see indeed this is a day of grace,
Of wondrous grace: and where I take so much
I should be churlish did I not rejoice
That I may rank behind no one of you
In the free dispensation of my favour.
And there's one act would set the balance even,
Lay it even lower against me: it is this,
For I will do it: John Palicio,
I do forgive thee . . .
Mar. Now I thank thee, sire.
Pal. And I, my lord, who never thought to do it,
Will forgive thee. DO YOU FORGIVE US ALL.

THE RETURN
OF
ULYSSES

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS
IN A MIXED MANNER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ATHENA.
ULYSSES.
PENELOPE.
TELEMACHUS.

EUMÆUS . . .	*swineherd to Ulysses.*
EURYMACHUS *AMPHINOMUS* *ANTINOUS* *CTESIPPUS*	*wooers of Penelope.*
PHEMIUS.	*a bard.*
LEIODES	*a soothsayer.*

CHORUS of WOOERS.

Neatherd and other servants to Telemachus and Eumæus.

Retainers of Wooers; and Maids of Penelope.

The scene is laid in Ithaca. The first Act on the sea-shore. The second at Eumæus' hut. The last three in the hall of Ulysses' house.

ULYSSES

ACT · I

Ithaca: the seashore. Thick mist thro' which Ulysses can scarcely be discerned asleep under a tree. In the foreground, Athena.

ATHENA.

THIS day, the last of twenty fateful years,
Fulfils the toil and wanderings of the Greeks,
Who sailed with Agamemnon against Troy
To win back Argive Helen; for to-day
Ulysses, last and most despaired of all,
Is safe again in Ithaca: and in truth
Have I, Athena, though the wisest power
And mightiest in Olympus, striven long
In heaven and earth to save him from the wrath
Of great Poseidon; but at length my will
Nears its accomplishment, for on this isle

Of Ithaca was he at break of morn
Landed by good Phæacian mariners,
Who ply the convoys of the dangerous sea;
Even as they promised him, their king and queen,
Alcinous and Aretè, honouring him
With loving gifts, tripods of bronze and iron,
Raiment and bowls of gold: thro' blackest night,
And the confusion of the baffling waters,
With sail and oar urging their keel they bore him,
Who all the while wrapt in sound slumber lay
Deep likest death; and in that trance they laid him
Beneath yon olive tree, and, by his feet,
The gifts they brought: there may ye see him lying,
And there the gifts: and yet ye scarce may see,
With so thick darkness have I drenched the air,
Lest when he wake, the sight and sweet desire
Of home supplant his cunning, and he rise
Forthwith, and entering suddenly his house
Fall by the treachery of the infatuate lords,
Who prey there on his substance unrestrained,
Sitting in idle suit to woo his wife,
Who weeps his fate unknown; and thus my will
At last were crossed. So hither am I come
Myself to break the sleep I sent, and warn him
Against his foes. And now must I awake him;
But first will doff my helmet, and appear

In mortal semblance, as a delicate youth,
Some prince of the isle: so shall my javelin,
Long robe and shining sandals not betray
My godhead. He to me, disguised and strange,
Will answer nothing truly, nor believe
What truth I tell: 'tis thus I love to prove him,
And catch his ready mind at unawares.

Wake, merchant, wake, awake; whoe'er thou beest,
That sleepest thus so nigh the public road:
Arouse thee, man, and guard thy store: Look to it!
Ay, if some passer-by have not already
Filched from thee a sad loan of bronze or iron.
For though we reverence Zeus, thou giv'st occasion
To make a thief even of an honest man.

ULYSSES (*awaking*).

Hail, friend, whom first my waking eyes behold
Here in this land: and since thou speakest friendly,
Prove now my friend, and show how best to save
These few things, ay, and save myself, being here
Without thee friendless. And, I prithee, tell me
What land is this? What people dwell herein?
Is it an island, or some mainland shore
That from its fertile plains shelves to the deep?

Ath. What hast thou asked, man? Couldst thou hither come,

Not shipwrecked, as is plain, and yet not know
Our famous isle? Not so am I deceived.
Thyself tell rather who thou art and whence,
Else learn'st thou nought of me: And speak but truth.
Ill speeds entreaty on a lying tongue.

Ul. Indeed I speak but truth, friend, when I say
I know not where I stand; as thou must grant
At hearing how I came: for from wide Crete
Have I fared over sea with these my goods—
Where to my sons I left as much again,
When thence I fled in fear, because I slew
The noble and swift-footed prince of Crete,
Orsilochus, son of Idomeneus;
Who threatened to despoil me of the wealth
I won at Troy, suffering for many years
The woes of that long war; and all his grudge
Was that I had not served the king his father,
But kept my own retainers—for which thing
He would have robbed me: but I smote him dead.—

Ath. Ah, king of ready wile, what tale is this
Of Crete and of thy sons, which when I bid thee
Speak truth, trips on thy tongue? Dost thou not know
Thy goddess, great Athena? Was't not I
Who stirred the hearts of those Phæacian men
To bring thee hither? Wherefore in my ears
Pourest thou fables?

Ul. 'Tis thy voice indeed,
Which tho' my eyes were blinded, well I knew.
Voice of Athena, dearest of the gods!
Now with my soul I grasp thee, now I see,
And worship thee, divine one, and thy knees
Embrace: but in this darkness and disguise
Not even a god had known thee; blame me not.
Ath. Nor for thy false tale to a stranger spoken?
Ul. Since thou who lackest cause hast more deceived.
And I—where were I now without my guile,
Without thy help?
Ath. If I should help thee still,
What wouldst thou ask?
Ul. Answer me.—Say, what shore
Is this I stand on, which is hidden from me
By so thick mist: whether they promised true
Who brought me hither, and it be indeed
Ithaca, or whether, as I rather fear,
Some other land, to which my fated curse
Hales me, or ever I may see my own?
Ath. 'Tis Ithaca.
Ul. I pray thee by my longing
For that dear boon, goddess, deceive me not.
Ath. Thou dost not yet believe; but if I show thee
Thy very Ithaca, wilt thou believe?
Turn now and set thy back against the noise

Of the stilly-moaning surge and look inland.

Ul. Nought.

Ath. Look!

Ul. I see nought. 'Tis a thicker mist
Than ever in my own cloud-gathering isle
Clung to the frowning cliffs, when the warm south
Beat up the vapours from the seas at morn.

Ath. Look.

Ul. Now it brightens somewhat, or mine eye
Wearies with vainly poring on the dark.

Ath. Look.

Ul. Ay, the vapours lift, the highlands loom,
The air obeys thee: thro' its thinning veils
The figure of some mountain jags the sky;
And those should be my hills: 'tis Neritos,
'Tis Ithaca indeed.

Ath. 'Tis Ithaca.

Ul. O Blessed Light, that unto all men's eyes
Shewest the lands and waters: that uprisest
Day after day upon the windy seas
And fertile plains, valleys and lovely hills,
Rivers and shores, and heights and peopled towns;
Now in all Greece is no tongue praiseth thee
As mine, nor heart thanketh; nor any eye
Rejoicest thou as mine.

Ath. Turn now to left.

There is the haven of Phorcys, here the tree,
Thy well-remembered olive; and to right
The rock-roofed cave, where thou so oft hast done
Sweet sacrifice unto the native Nymphs.
Ul. Soil of my dear-desirèd fatherland,
For warrant that I dream not, take this kiss;
My home! And ye, dear sisters of the spring,
I raise my hands to you, whom nevermore
I looked to greet; but now, children of heaven,
As once of old I praise you, and henceforth
Will pay with loving vows, if your fair queen
But grant me life, and comfort in my son.
Ath. Now thou believest.
Ul. See, there be the firs,
Which eastward of my house bar the red dawn
With black, and in their feathery tops at night
Sigh to the moon. Ay, and my house I see
Unchanged. 'Tis Ithaca.
Ath. Wilt thou not go
Now to thy home, and with the sweet surprise
Of thy desired return gladden thy wife,
And greet thy son, a man, whom thou didst leave
In cradle? See, I here will guard thy goods.
Thou wouldst be gone.
Ul. Goddess, if strong desire
Could ever conquer me, now should I do

A thing for which no man might blame me, nay
Even tho' he pitied me, if too great longing
Should fool me to my ruin. But in my heart
Are other thoughts. The wife of Agamemnon
At his return welcomed the king with state,
And to his chamber led, but in the bath
Soon as he lay, giving him honied words,
She slew him with a dagger, to the deed
Being prompted by her guilty paramour,
Ægisthus. Ten years numbered since that crime
Double the equal motive of my fear:
Nor can a woman, when her lord, tho' loved,
Is long away, be trusted, that she should not
In weariness at last forsake her faith.
Wherefore I would not enter in my house,
Nay, nor be known of any, till I hear
Such tidings as bespeak my coming well.

Ath. O brave! thy wary mind has gone before,
The way I would have led it: thou art as ever
Fore-reckoner with chance, to take thy stand
Armed at all points.

Ul. This fear, goddess, I learnt
Of blind Tiresias, when at Circe's bidding
I sailed far south beyond the coasts of men,
To dark Cimmerian cloud-land, and I saw
The hapless king himself, who with thin voice

Poured forth his wrongs ; and many more I saw,
Who suffered pain : the tearful shadows penned
In mansions of austere Persephonè.
From that old prophet's tongue of warning weird
Still for myself in the end I gathered hope,
And treasured it, but from thy tongue fear ill.

Ath. Yet shouldst thou cherish all the words he spake.

Ul. I ask not now what shall be, but what is.
Beneath yon roof what passes ? Thou canst give
Present assurance. Tell me then. My wife—
She is well ?

Ath. And beautiful.

Ul. Faithful ?

Ath. And brave.

Ul. My son Telemachus ?

Ath. He too is well.

Ul. Great are the gods in heaven ! I need no more.
Thee, Goddess, will I worship while I live.

Ath. And much thou needest me yet. Hark while I tell.
Three years thy house hath been the hostelry
Of dissolute and shameless men, the lords
And princes of the isles and western shores ;
Who woo thy wife, and feasting in thy halls
Make waste of all thy substance day and night.

As men besiege a city, and their host
Encamp about and let none out nor in,
Waiting the day when hunger and sore need,
Sharper than iron and crueler than fire,
Shall bow the starvèd necks beneath the yoke:
So sit they there: and 'mong them is an oath
That none will leave till one be satisfied;
Whoe'er it be that in the end shall take
Thy fair wife, and thy house and goods and lands;
Which false and covetous oath, since all have shared,
Must be the death of all.

Ul. Now with thine aid
Shall they be scattered, were their cursed swarm
Thick as the rooks, which from his new-sown fields
The husbandman a moment stays to scare,
Raising both hands.

Ath. Not so may they escape.
Better thou hadst not now returned, if one
Of all these men avoid his destined death.

Ul. How say'st thou, goddess, shall these men be slain?

Ath. How were Ulysses' foes then wont to die?

Ul. It may not be.

Ath. Thou wert not used to fear.

Ul. Nay, but returned from exile and hard war,
I would not usher battle in my home.

Ath. Think'st thou of peace? Hadst thou but hence been stayed
So long as shall suffice yon dying moon
To launch her young bark on the western sea,
Then had Penelope no more been thine.
Ul. Thou saidst that she was faithful.
Ath. She withstands
The urgence of the wooers day by day;
But 'gainst herself, to save thy house from loss,
Deeming thee dead indeed, now falls to yield.
Ul. Vengeance upon them! Grant me but thine aid,
And though they count by hundreds they shall die.
Ath. If one escape, his joy will be for thine.
Ul. All shall be slain, though 'twere a task too heavy
For great Alcides. But my son in this
Should stand with me. May I not see him first?
Shall he not know me, and, in that embrace
I yearn for, knit his willing strength with mine?
Ath. Telemachus hath lately at my bidding
Sailed hence to Lacedæmon, there to inquire
What might be learnt of thee.
Ul. Was this well done,
Or kindly of thee, who couldst have told him all:
To send him far, upon a useless errand,
Out of my sight, the eve of my return?

Ath. I sent him for his safety, there to win
Opinion too of such as knew him not,
And rouse remembrance of thee in the world.
To-day is he returned: I have brought his ship
North of the island, as was need, to shun
The wooers' galley sent to take him; there
Is he disbarked alone. Thou mayst be first
To meet him.

Ul. Lead me thither.

Ath. Ah! thou forgettest.
If any one but he should see thy face?—

Ul. Contrive then that I meet with him alone.

Ath. How if my plot were better, so that all
Might see thee, yet none know thee but thy son?

Ul. What manner of disguise is in thy thought?

Ath. Disfigurement, which thou mayst shrink to bear.

Ul. Ay, if my son behold me ill transformed.

Ath. Yet he alone shall see thee as thou art.

Ul. Then tell me, goddess, what thou wouldst: thou knowest
Playing another's part I am most myself.

Ath. But I will make thee now least like thyself.

Ul. How! shall I stoop then to be less than man?

Ath. Nay, but of men the vilest, though a man.
For that thou mayst be hidden, lo! I will change

Thy outward seeming to the piteous aspect
Of age and beggary. Thy supple skin
I'll wrinkle on thy joints, thy thick brown hair
Rob from thy head, and dim thy radiant eyes,
And o'er thy shoulders bowed cast sorry rags,
To make thee loathed of men. In such disguise
Mayst thou in safety seek thy herdsman's hut,
Eumæus: he is faithful, and with kindness
Will serve thee as a stranger in distress,
No less than he will welcome thee revealed.
Accept his food and shelter, and the while
Learn from his lips what friends thou hast to look for,
What foes to reckon with, what wrongs to avenge;
And humour as thou wilt his honest ears,
Awaiting till I thither send thy son.

Ul. When wilt thou send him?

Ath. He will come ere noon.

Ul. Then must he first behold me thus deformed?

Ath. He cannot know thee. Thou betray thyself
No whit; I will be near and make occasion
To shew thee to him, as thou art, alone.

Ul. I have had no hope, goddess, but in thine aid:
Long as that tarried I despaired not then;
How should I, when thou comest, deny thee now?

Ath. Then first unto the cave, therein to stow
These goods; and after by this olive trunk

Sit we awhile together: when thou hast heard
My counsel, I will work this change upon thee,
That one who saw thee now of kingly port,
Hale and well-liking, ay, and bowed the head,
Should, when he next saw, spurn thee with his foot;
Thus must it be. Come, let us to the cave.

ACT · II

The hut of EUMÆUS. (*Same background as Act I.*)
Some swine seen thro' pens.

EUMÆUS (*who is cutting a thong for his sandal*).

Let man serve God, but not for that require
An answerable favour: there is none
Outside himself: but yet within himself
He hath his guerdon and may be content.
Some three and thirty years of servitude
Have taught me this; dependence on the gods
Wins independence of the gods and fate.
I that was born a prince have lived a slave,—
No fault of mine;—and still if Zeus so willed
That man might look for favour, I might hope
Once more, ere I grow old, to make return
Unto my royal home and kingly sire,
—If yet he lives,—and rule myself the realm
I was born heir to: be good king Eumæus,
So should it be, Eumæus, king of men.
Nay—I must play the king over these swine;
This homestead for my kingdom, this hut for palace,
This bench my throne, these crowded pens and styes

My city; and I will boast 'twere hard to find
A commonwealth of men, whom equal justice
Flattered in distribution to this pitch
Of general content, such fat well-being
As holds among my folk, their laws regardant
Of them they govern and their good alone.
Ay, so: a king of beasts, no king at all.
Swineherd Eumæus; who would call me king?
Fool, fool! Serve God, Eumæus, and mend thy shoes.
And why complain? Had not Laertes too
A son that feared the gods? and where is he?
Would he not now be glad to be alive,
Were't but to envy me who feed his swine,
And guard his goods from robbers, and pretend
The hope of his return; which is less like
For that Ulysses than for this Eumæus;—
There too I best him,—since 'tis easier
For any living slave to climb a throne,
Than for a king once dead to step again
Upon the joyous threshold of his house,
And take the loving kisses from the lips
Of wife and child.—Hark to the hounds. What foe
Invades my kingdom? O a piteous sight.
Off, dogs;—why they will rend him—Mesaulius, ho!
Cottus, call off the dogs! Will they not leave him?
To kennel, curs!—Ye heavens! Beggary

Is beggared in this miserable beggar.

Enter Ulysses (disguised).

How wast thou near, old man, to end thy days
Beside my gate, and bring me shame and sorrow:
And that no fault of mine, so suddenly
Hast thou appeared. Come, come, sir; step within.
Surely 'tis food thou needest. On this table
Are bread and wine, and I can bring thee meat:
Sit and be satisfied.

ULYSSES.

Now may the gods,
Since thou this day giv'st me so good a welcome,
Grant thee thy dearest wish, whate'er it be.

Eum. Thou art my guest, old man: and if there came
A meaner even than thou, I should not stint
To offer of my best. Strangers and beggars
Are sent from Zeus: and tho' a poor man's gift
Be poor, a hearty welcome makes it rich.

Ul. I pray the gods reward thee.

Eum. Nay, there's the meat;
I'll fetch it thee. [*Exit.*

Ul. Was ever sound on earth
So musical as the remembered voice
That welcomes home? By heaven, 'twas yesterday
That I was here. No change at all: this bench,

This board:—the very hogs might be the same.
O my good bread and wine! And here's his loaf,
The shape he ever made; and cut the same,
Scooped to the thumb. Hail, grape of Ithaca!
Good day to thee! (*Drinks.*)

Eum. (*re-entering*). See, here is meat in plenty:
Fall to and spare not.

Ul. Thank thee, sir; I thank thee.

Eum. Art thou of Ithaca, old man?

Ul. Nay, sir;
Indeed I am not.

Eum. When cam'st thou then among us?

Ul. With this day's sun I first beheld your isle.

Eum. Eh! hath a ship arrived so late in harbour?
Whence hails she?

Ul. From Thesprotia coasting south;
But driven far out to sea in beating back
Put in for water; when the notion took me
To leave her, and pursue my own starvation
Without the risk of drowning.

Eum. And how then
Cam'st thou aboard a vessel so ill-found?

Ul. My tale were long, sir, should I once begin:
And since I have seen no food since yestermorn,
Believe I'd lend thee ear rather than mouth.

Eum. Ay, so, no fool, and I was but a churl

To bid thee talk and eat: eat, sir, in peace.
Ul. I pray thee while I eat tell of thyself,
Whom here thou servest, and who rules this isle.
Eum. I am a servant, sir, that hath no master:
These swine I tend are no man's · those I kill
I kill for any one; for on this isle
We pay our service to a gap between
A grandsire and a grandchild. Dost thou take me?
Ul. Yes, friend: thy master is away or dead.
Eum. Both as I think. The while, for lack of tidings,
We make believe he lives. His ancient father,
Decrepit and despairing, lies aloof,—
We call him king no longer;—and his son,
The old man's grandchild, is away on quest
Of any tidings to be gleaned from those
Who years agone fought with his sire at Troy.
His widow keeps his house, and hath in hand
Some five or six score suitors. Judge from this
What hope hath beggary in Ithaca.
Ul. In all my wanderings never have I found
A kinder host. But since thou sayest thy master,
Whose absence makes thee masterless, was one
Who fought at Troy, I too was in that war;
If thou wouldst tell his name, I may know somewhat
To cheer his wife and child.
Eum. Try not that talk,

Old man. No more of him shall traveller hither
Come bringing tidings that may win their ear.
Lightly indeed for welcome's sake will vagrants
Speak false, nor have they cause to wish for truth.
Nay, and there's none strays to this isle, but goes
Seeking my mistress, and there spins his lie;
While she with tender care asks of each thing,
And from her sorrowing eyes the tears fall fast,
Hearing the name she doth not dare to speak.
And soon enough wouldst thou too coin thy tale,
Couldst thou but win a blanket for thy back:
The while for him vultures and wolves are like
To have stripped his bones of flesh—ay, ay, he is dead—
Or fish have preyed upon him, and his ribs
Bleach on the sea-shore, sunk in drifting sand.
Such fate is his, grievous to all who loved him,
And most to me; who ne'er shall find again
So kind a lord, wherever I may go:
Not even again if home to father and mother
I should return, where I was bred and born.
Nor are my tears for them, yearn as I do
With these eyes to behold them, and my country;
But my desire is for Ulysses gone:
Speaking whose name, stranger, tho' far from hearing
I do obeisance (*towards Ul.*); for he loved me well;
And worshipful I call him, be he dead.

Ul. If 'tis Ulysses, friend, whom thou lamentest,
I know he lives.

Eum. Try not that tale, I say.

Ul. Now, sir, tho' thou deny it and think I lie,
Ulysses will return, and on that day
Give me my due; since I dare call on Zeus,
First of the gods, and by this friendly table
Swear, and his dear home whither I be come,
This thing shall be, and with the running year
He shall return.

Eum. Nay, 'tis not I shall pay
Thy recompense. Content thee, man, and drink.
Why wouldst thou force persuasion? Tell me rather
Thy own true story, who thou art and whence.

Ul. Would then that thou couldst give me food and wine,
Ay, and the gods fair sunshine and no toil,
The while my tale should last: for on this bench
Would I take comfort of thee many a day.
But of thy lord . . . .

Eum. Wilt thou not cease from that!

Ul. With my own ships I fought at Ilion;
And tho' I look not now, in age and rags,
A master among men, nay, nor a foe
Many would fear, yet mayst thou see on me
The sign of what I have been, and I think

Still from the gratten one may guess the grain.

Eum. (*aside*). How age and misery will brag! And this
To me, who really am a king.

Ul. 'Twas then
I knew Ulysses, and have since, like him
And many a Greek, striven against destiny
To gain my home:—at length our ship was cast
On mountainous Thesprotia, where the king
Pheidon was kind to me, and there I heard—
Nor yet are many weeks passed since that day—
Full tidings of Ulysses, and I saw
What wealth his arm had gotten: he himself
Was travelled to Dodona, but by this
Should be returned.

Eum. Stranger, if all thy words,
That grow in number, should outreach in tale
The moments of his absence, they were vainly
Poured in mine ears.

Ul. Nay, then, and if indeed
Ulysses came himself, here of his friends
He would not be received.

Eum. Ay, that may be:
And time will change a man so from himself,
That oft I wonder none have e'er contrived
To make pretence to be Ulysses' self.

That were a game for thee, old man, if age
Did not so far belie thee. Nay, nay, nay!
Signs there would be: and if these eyes should see him,
And seeing know not, I would serve them so
That they should see no more.
Ul. Now when he comes . . .
Eum. Still harking back! I tell thee, friend, our thought
Is rather for his son Telemachus,
And his return; who when he promised well
To be his father's match, went wandering hence
To Lacedæmon, seeking for his sire:
An idle quest and perilous, for I say
'Twould much increase the tender love of them
That woo the mother, could they kill the son,
And quarrel for the inheritance: and now
They have sent a ship to take him in the straits,
As he comes home: but may the gods protect him.
Tho', till I see him safe, my heart is vexed.
Ul. Fear not; the gods will save him.
Eum. Thank thee, sir.
Hast ever been in Sparta?
Ul. Ask me nought,
If thou wilt credit nought; or shall I say
I have never lodged in Pitanè, nor drunk
Out of Eurotas, nor on summer noons

Gazed on the steep sun-checquered precipices
Of huge Taygetus?

Eum. Thy pardon, sir.
Hast eaten well?

Ul. Ay, to content: but, friend,
I shall not prey upon thee: an hour or two
I'll rest me here; then, if thou shew the road
To good Ulysses' house, I'll e'en be gone.
Food must be there in plenty: I make no doubt
To beg a meal till I may serve for hire.

Eum. Why, man, what put this folly in thy head?
'Twere the short way to end thy days, to go
Among that insolent and godless herd,
To tempt their violence. Not such as thou
Their servants are: they that attend on them
Are young and gaily clad and fair of face:
And though the polished tables lack not food,
'Tis not for such as thou the hot feast smokes
From morn till eve, and the red wine is poured.
Bide here; for here thou vexest none, nor me
Nor any of my fellows. Bide awhile,
And if Telemachus return, I warrant
Thou shalt have no complaint. Hark, I hear feet:
Some one now comes.

Ul. And 'tis a friend; the dogs
Bark not, but fawn around. (*Aside.*) If this be he!

I dare not rise and look.

Enter Telemachus.

Eum. Why he! 'tis he!
Telemachus, my son Telemachus,
Art thou returned in safety?

Ul. (*aside.*) Praised be the gods! I see my son indeed!

TELEMACHUS (*to Eum.*).

You see me, father.

Eum. Light of mine eyes, thou'rt come, Telemachus;
All shall go forward with us once again.

Ul. (*aside*). He calls him father, and I may not speak.

Tel. Hath aught been wrong?

Eum. Nay, nought is changed for that.
'Twas only lack of thee: and with the fear
Some ill might hap to thee, what dost thou think
Must old Eumæus feel?

Tel. What couldst thou fear?

Eum. Didst thou not know? The wooers sent a ship
To take thee, son. Thou didst not? Well, some god
Protected thee. Now let me look on thee.
Come within. Sit thee down.

Tel. So will I gladly.
Ere I would venture to the house, I came
To talk with thee, and learn if aught has passed.
My mother? . . .

Eum. All is well, prince, yet; she bides
Patient and brave, and weeps both day and night;
Weeps too for thee. Give me thy spear, my son.
Now sit thee down. I say we have feared for thee.

Tel. (*to Ul.*). Nay, rise not, stranger; there be other seats,
And men to set them.—Pardon me that my joy
O'erlooked thee. Thou hast guests, Eumæus?

Eum. Nay,
None but this ancient father.

Tel. And who is he?

Eum. To me is he a stranger as to thee.
'Twas yesterday, he tells me, that his ship
Thesprotian, as he says, driven from her course,
Put in for water: when for some mistrust
Or weariness of voyage he remained.
He hath fed with me, but thou being now returned
He looks to be a suppliant at the house.
He is thy man.

Tel. Eumæus, thou must know
I could not, whatsoe'er his claim, receive him
Where I myself am threatened: and even my mother

Holds no sure mind, wavering from day to day
Who shall be master. No: there is no place
For suppliants at the house: but as thy guest
I still may treat him well: here he shall have
Raiment and all he needs, and I will give him
A sword, and bid him fare where'er he will.
But not to the house I bid him come, for fear
Violence befall him and I be accursed.

Ul. Sir, since thy kindness makes me bold to speak,
Thou hast my thanks; nor can I hear thy wrongs,
Nor see thy shame unmoved, for thou art noble.
Hast thou provoked this, tell me, or are thy people
Moved by some god to hate, or is't thy brethren
Play thee false?

Tel. Nay, there is neither grudge nor hate
Betwixt me and my folk, nor do my brethren
Stand faithlessly aloof. 'Tis all to say
That Zeus hath made our house of single heirs:
Arceisios gat one only son Laertes,
And he one only son, Ulysses; I,
Ulysses' son, am too his only child:
And he hath left his house the prey of foes.
I cannot aid thee, stranger.

Ul. O would that I
Were young as thou, and in my present mood;
That I were this Ulysses or his son:

Far rather would I die slain in my halls
By my thick foes, than see this reckless wrong;
My good farms plundered, and my herds devoured,
My red wine wasted, and my handmaidens
Hither and thither haled about, at will
Of such a rabble as fear not God nor man,
Spoilers and robbers, who have set their hearts
Vainly upon a purpose, which I say
Shall never be accomplished.

Athena appears at the door to Ulysses.

Tel. I pray the gods
It never be, and thank thee well, my friend,
For thy good will.

Eum. How art thou moved, old man.

Ul. The heart unmoved by others' wrongs is dead:
And yet maybe I am somewhat overwrought;
If I may go within . . .

Eum. Ay, go within,
And rest thee; thou hast need.

Ul. I thank thee, friend.
I'll lay me down to sleep: here I but shackle
Your private talk.

Eum. Be at thy ease, I pray.

Tel. Go, father; rest thee well.

Ul. I thank thee, sir. [*Exit.*

Eum. How camest thou, son? Where didst thou land?

Tel. Is't true
The wooers sent a ship?

Eum. Didst thou not meet them?

Tel. Hark now, and hear in what strange manner warned
I knew their ambush, to avoid them.

Eum. Ah!
Thou knewest it, thou knewest!

Tel. Wilt thou think
I was at Sparta but three days ago?
There in my sleep the goddess, at whose word
I made this voyage, came and stood beside me,
Called me by name, and bade me quick return;
And for my safety warned me that a ship
'Twixt Ithaca and Samè lay in wait;
Which if I would avoid I must sail round,
Keeping the west of the isle; and for that voyage
She promised a fair wind. So the next morn
Was I at Pylos; whence as I set forth,
I found the wind, and sailing day and night,
With swift unbroken passage came to shore
Last evening north of the isle. Hither alone
I passed in the dark, and sent my ship about.

Eum. That was well done: I praise the gods for that.

I knew that they would save thee.

Tel. But, Eumæus,
What of the ship? What knowest thou? What means it?
Were all agreed plotting my life together,
Or whose deed is it?

Eum. One rancorous spirit rules them,—
Save Lord Amphinomus, who stands as ever
Within the bounds: of all the rest there's none
That would not take thy life by stealth, nor one
Who openly would dare.

Tel. Who sailed the ship?

Eum. Antinous.

Tel. Ah!

Eum. And if I die to avenge it,
Son, he shall pay for it.

Tel. Talk, I pray, of safety,
Not of revenge. Shall I make bold to go
Straight to the house, or must I hide me here?

Eum. Bide, son, bide! 'Tis not safe. Let me go, son.
When once 'tis known in the isle that thou'rt returned,
Then thou mayst shew thyself. The cowards fear
The love the people bear thee. Let me go.

Tel. Is all else well?

Eum. All's well where ill is well.

Tel. Eumæus, I'll not venture yet: but thou

Haste to the house, and in my mother's ear
Whisper I am here : but let none other guess
That thou hast tidings of me.
Eum. Not to tell
Thy grandsire, son ? He scarce hath eat or drunk
While thou hast been away : 'twere well he knew,
And quickly ; for an hour is much to one
Whose life leans on the grave.
Tel. My safe return
Can be no secret, but my hiding-place
Must not be known : therefore I would not have
Thee for my herald. Thou mayst bid my mother
Send one to comfort him ; but go not thou
Wandering among the hills. My bidding done,
Make swift return. I shall be here.
Eum. I pray
Let not that old man here come round thee, son,
With idle stories of thy sire : he is full
Of tales of Troy : and if he win thine ear
He hath a purpose.
Tel. He ! Nay, trust me, father.
Eum. Well, he will try.
Tel. Fear not.
Eum. He hath a tongue :
He saith he fought at Ilion. Then, he saith
He knew Ulysses.

Tel. Saith he so?

Eum. And then
He hath been in Lacedæmon too.

Tel. His talk
While thou'rt away may well beguile the time.

Eum. Ay, and thee too. Thou hast not heard, I fear,
Aught of thy father now, where thou hast been?

Tel. Somewhat, but nothing recent. What I know
I'll tell thee later. Thou couldst gather nought
From this old man?

Eum. He is cunning: didst thou see
How he could counterfeit? I tell thee, son,
He hath not been here an hour, and never knew
Aught of thy father; but he plucks from me
The story word by word, and then at once
Bursts out,—he knew Ulysses: ay, he stayed
Eating to speak of him.

Tel. What said he of him?

Eum. I would not hear him, son: I would not hear him.

Tel. Think you he lied?

Eum. Ay, ay. Why, how believe
Thy father now is in Thesprotia,
Where the king Pheidon hath a ship all stored
To bring him home?

Tel. Eumæus, good Eumæus!

What if 'tis true?

Eum. True! There, 'tis as I thought:
I would not leave thee with him, son; he is quick:
He will delude thee.

Tel. I must hear his tale,
Though it be false. Go thou: my ship will else
Be round before thee. Go, and never fear
That this old man will turn my head.

Eum. Be warned.
Trust him not, son. There is something strange about him
I like not.

Tel. Come: as far as to the gate
I will go with thee. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Ulysses as himself.

Ul. Lo! now the sun in the mid goal of heaven
Hath climbed to view my fortunes, and my shade
On this well-trodden floor falls neither way: 682
So towers my genius; so my future and past
Lie gathered for the moment.—How oft in dreams,
When longing hath forecast this hour, I have loved
The rescuing tears that loosed my heart: and now
The womanish water wells, I bid it back:
For nature stammers in me, and I see
Imagination hath a grasp of joy 689

Finer than sense; and my most passionate spirit,
When most it should leap forth, hangs back unwilling
To officer the trembling instruments,
By which delight is served. Back, then, my tears!
Fate rules; reason should fashion me.—And welcome
Even this harshness of fate; for if my son
Shall know me as I am, not as a merchant
Should I return at ease, that men might ask
Whether Ulysses were returned or no;
Rather in blood than doubt.—Here on this bench
I'll wait him, nor myself be first to speak:
And 'twill be tried for once how a man's son
Shall know his father, never having seen him.

Re-enter Telemachus.

Tel. Why, who art thou? Not he that on this bench
Sattest so late! In truth I much mistook thee,
Or thou art changed. Thy hair was thin and white,
Thy body rough and pinched with age, thy clothes
Were meanest rags. Say art thou he, the same,
Eumæus' guest from the Thesprotian ship?

Ul. Ay, son, I am.

Tel. Surely thou art a god.
Be gracious to our house! [*Kneels.*

Ul. (*rising*). Nay, rise, my son.
I am no god. Why wilt thou liken me

To those immortals? I am thy father, son,
Ulysses to my home at last returned. [*Kisses him.*
Tel. Alas, thou art a god, and thy words mock me.
Ul. Thou knowest me not. [*Sits.*
Tel. Say, if thou wert a man,
How couldst thou put that change of semblance on,
Which only gods may use?
Ul. The wise Athena
Uses me as she will: then was I old
That none might know me; now I am myself
That thou mayst know.—'Tis I.
Tel. Father! my father!
O, happy day. [*Weeps on his neck.*
Ul. Thy kisses, O, my son:
Thy kisses and thy tears, my son, my son.
Tel. O, thou art come. O, happy, happy day.
Ul. I am come, Telemachus: but how to know
'Tis I?
Tel. O, I am sure; who could be like thee?
I knew too thou wouldst come, dear father, and yet
I never honoured thee enough: I thought
I should be worthy of thee: now I fear . . . .
Ul. I must be unlike thy thought, son; but in thee
I see myself again of twenty years:
Nay, I was somewhat thicker, but maybe
That will make up; and thou hast got instead

Thy mother's grace. 'Tis true we mostly shape
Less to the father.

Tel. How, sire, didst thou come?

Ul. A good Phæacian ship brought me last night.
I came to land in the dark: and all the spoils
I have brought with me are hidden in the cave,
Till we may fetch them forth.

Tel. First come thou home.

Ul. And would I might. The hope of twenty years
Is gathered in this hour. Come home, thou sayst:
Ah, son; and would I might; but what of them
That stop the way?

Tel. The suitors of my mother?
O, they will fly to hear of thy return.

Ul. They must not fly. All, where they have done me wrong,
Must with their lives atone. This is the cause
Of my disguise, that none should know me here
But thou, to whom alone I am revealed,
That plotting with thee I may draw the net
About them. This the goddess bids me, son;
To slay thy mother's wooers.

Tel. Father, I know
Thou art unmatchable among the Greeks
In warriorship and wisdom, ay, and here
Is none would dare to face thee: yet by tens

They reckon, and I fear would overpower thee
By very number.

Ul. Say: how many be they?

Tel. Out of Dulichium there be two and fifty
Princes and lords, each with his serving-man:
From Samè, four and twenty: from Zakynthus
A score; and even of Ithaca itself
Twelve of the best, with Phemius the bard,
Medon, and many followers: 'gainst all these
We are but two.

Ul. I fear them not, my son.

Tel. Seek other aid, I pray, ere 'gainst so many
We venture.

Ul. What, son, sayst thou, if Athena
And father Zeus aid us? will they, thou thinkest,
Suffice, or must we cast about to find
Some other champion?

Tel. Truly they are the best
Thou namest, father; tho' among the clouds
Their seat is, and their countenance withheld
From mortal men.

Ul. They will not hold aloof,
When once our spears are plunging in the breasts
Of that vain rabble. Goes thy heart with mine?

Tel. With thee and for thee, father, will I fight,
Askest thou?

Ul. Wilt thou bear to look on me
As late thou sawest me, and seeing me so,
Find not the least diminishment of love?

Tel. I never shall forget this godlike mien,
Whence to disguise thou deignest as a god.

Ul. But when thou seest me mocked and scorned, a slave,
A beggar where I am lord, wilt thou discover
No indignation?

Tel. I will hide my wrath.

Ul. For I must be thy guest among my foes.

Tel. To be my guest, if they should set upon thee
To drive thee forth, will force me to resist.

Ul. Fear not the threatenings of those doomèd men.

Tel. They all are armed, and thou wilt be unarmed.

Ul. Tho' they provoke me I will bide my time.

Tel. But how if they assault thee unprepared?

Ul. The goddess will withhold their impious hands.

Tel. Lurk rather here until the plot be ripe.

Ul. Nay, son; and were the lure of home less strong
To me so long deprived, yet would I see
Myself the wrongs there done me, see the shame
Of which men speak; and, once within the hall,
I can take count and measure of my foes.
A just cause, bold heart, and the aid of heaven
Should still thy fear.

Tel. Tell me thy bidding, father!
Ul. Ay, so 'tis best: and thro' thee I may come
To see thy mother;—hark, the course is plain:
Go to the town; announce thine own return;
Thence to the house, and to Eumæus say
Thou wilt receive me; he must know no more:
Bid him to-morrow fetch me to the hall.
And when thou seest thy mother, tell her thus;
Thou hast seen a stranger in Eumæus' hut,
Who having known thy father, carries news
That he is near. As to confirm thy tale,
Bring her to speech with me when none are by.
Ourselves may meet at night, and then consult
In secret on what stratagem may grow
From that occasion, or what further thing
The goddess may command.
Tel. Now thy disguise
Is my chief fear, father; I know these men:
Their insolent assumption would not brook
Any intruder, but against a beggar
They will make sport of outrage.
Ul. Sayst thou so?
Then shall we prove them thus: be they good men
They will show pity: if they mock my rags,
Try if they honour thee; and bid them make,
Each of his own, a portion unto me.

I then shall see their hearts: the more they rage,
Force them the more with full authority.
This canst thou well do. 'Tis thy harder task
Not to betray me. Youth is bold of heart
And hot in battle, but to guard the tongue
And to restrain the hand come with long years.
Tel. Now let this trial prove me once for all,
Whether in keeping counsel and in battle
I am thy true son, or another man.
Ul. All hangs on thee; for none but thou must know,
Not even thy mother. Tell me, I would learn
If in her thought I am alive or dead;
And what thine own mind was, fear not to say.
Tel. Truly 'twixt hope and hopelessness, we stood
In blank uncertainty; and if not yet
Our wishes wore the colour of our fears,
Now was the turn.
Ul. I come then not too soon?
Tel. Nay, nor too late.
Ul. 'Tis well, but time is short;
Tarry no longer. Get thee home, and there
Ordain a sacrifice, such as befits
This day of days: such as may well content
The favourable deities, and appease
The unfriendly. Guess, son, if thy heart is stirred,

How 'tis with me. The ties of home are dear,
And what a man is born to, both the place,
Where'er it be, that hath received his being
Out of oblivion, and given his mind
The shapes and hues of earth, the sights of heaven,
The place whence he sets forth to meet strange things,
Whither returns to find his own, himself;
This bides, the harbour of his fancy,—and draws him
Spite of all else from world's end to world's end.
And more, more dear, are those whose place it was,
Whose name he is called by, whom he calls his own,
Whose love hath borne and nurtured him, whose life
He is offshoot of and diligent support.
This love thou knowest, and being to-day returned
But from short voyage, mayst in little gauge
My joy returning after many years.
But what thou know'st not—mayst thou come to know!—
I'll tell thee. There be ties dearer than place
Or parents; there be bonds that break in pieces
The hearts that break them, and whose severance
Is more than banishment. Boy, 'tis thy mother
That makes this Ithaca the world to me;
These tears are hers: and seeing thee, my son,
Whose picture I have carried in my heart,
And year by year have checked and altered still

With vain imagination to thy growth
Since last I left thee fondled in her arms,
I learn how dear art thou. Now on thy brow
I'll set this kiss. Begone and do my bidding.
The goddess calls me: I must take again
That shape which late thou saw'st me in. Farewell.
Forget not when I am changèd what I am.

Tel. Thy first commands are dear, sire; I obey.

ACT · III

Hall in house of Ulysses: [*as described in note*]. *EURYMACHUS, AMPHINOMUS, CTESIPPUS, PHEMIUS, and many suitors. Noise and brawling. Remains of feast.*

EURYMACHUS.

PEACE! Will none hear? Silence! O peace,
I say.
Will ye not hearken? (*Some abatement.*)

AMPHINOMUS.

Friends, give ear awhile,
And hearken to Eurymachus.

CTESIPPUS.

For one,
I am not of his party.

A SUITOR.

Nay, nor I,
Let him command his own.

Eur. Princes and lords!
Have ye not chosen me to rule your feasts?

I claim no more precedence; I would urge
Nought but your honour, which ye go to shame
By such disordered brawling.

Ctes. O, we know thee.
'Tis nought Penelope should deem we lie
Under thy thumb!

A suitor. Ay, or what matters else
How these old beams may shake?

Ctes. What hast thou done?

Amph. My lords, ye do forget yourselves.

Ctes. O, nay.
Why went not Lord Eurymachus himself
To seize Telemachus? Doth he not bide
For the main chance? Will he not watch the play,
The while Antinous is furthered forth?
And—O, we know—when Lord Antinous
Returns, and saith *The thing ye wish is done;*
Telemachus is dead, and he who now
Winneth the widow winneth house and lands
And kingship; then the rich Eurymachus
Will raise his hands and weep, *The very thing*
I would have stayed. Alas! the neediness
And avarice of some!

Amph. Why, good Ctesippus,
Seek not a quarrel.

Ctes. Nay, but is't not so?

Amph. 'Twill never be. The just and equal gods
Have yet respect unto Ulysses' house.
And were't their will Telemachus should die,
He that went forth to slay him is the man
Whose heart they turned to do it. For me, I say,
I willed it not, and think 'twill never be.
Ctes. Thou'rt but a craven!
Eur. Get ye to your seats:
Pass we the bowl in peace, and while we drink
Let Phemius soothe our rivalries with song.
But one can win the prize, and whose 'twill be
Lies in the lap of Zeus. Fair play and peace!
Amph. And shame not this good house. Lack we a lord,
This courtesy is due unto ourselves.
Ctes. When brave Antinous returns, I say,
We shall grow warm again.
Eur. Peace for the bard!

PHEMIUS.

1.

Follow my song that leads,
Ye wooers all, and come
To praise the flock, that feeds
Upon the grassy meads
Of fair Dulichium:

Where Acheloüs laves with rippling sweet
The low fields red with wheat.

2.

For thee, I praise, Amphinomus, thou prince,
Shepherd of sunset pastures; and I tell
Again what once befell
Nisus, thy sire, long since.
To fruitful Lacedæmon when he came,
With lords that made resort
From Calydon's high court,
And western isles, at call of Helen's fame,
Wooing the hand of Leda's heavenly daughter:
But soon such jealousy and deadly gall
Inflamed the suitors all,
That then and there the fated slaughter
Of Danaans had begun,
Had not grave Tyndareus, her mortal sire,
To quench the kindling fire,
Called on Laertes' son.

3.

"Wisest of men, Ulysses, tell me true,
If skill or grace to keep the peace may be
Among the lawless princes, here that sue
For Helen's hand; if ever as of old

My house from curse of bloodshed may go free,
Do thou the rede unfold."
Straight answered him the wise Ulysses then,
"O son of Thestius, 'tis in my mind,
That thou these lawless men
By firmest oath shouldst bind
To honour him, and give him all their aid,
Whose suit shall favour find,
And honour from the maid;

1 *a*.

"Whoever it may be
Who in fair Helen's eye
His favour first may see;
And thus shall they agree."
Whereto did all comply;
And gave to Tyndareus their banded troth,
And singly took this oath:

1 *b*.

"To keep good peace we swear,
And let that man go free,
Who winneth Helen fair,
And from all wrong whate'er
Shield him, whoe'er he be.
Good or ill fortune lieth in the lap
Of Zeus, what haps let hap."

2 *a*.

So goodly Menelaus, whom erelong
Fair Helen chose of all the lords of Greece,
His bride led home in peace;
And no man did him wrong.
Then Tyndareus to good Icarius spake,
"Since now by one man's wit
Our house is saved, 'tis fit
That thou this day be friendly for my sake,
So at our hands he go not unrewarded:
Give him thy daughter, fair Penelope,
If so it pleaseth thee."
Who to this brother then the boon accorded:
And thus the wooers' strife
Ulysses by good counsel quelled, and won
Of Thestius' other son,
Penelope for wife.

3 *a*.

But when in time fair Helen's virtue failed,
He with the suitors bounden to befriend
Wronged Menelaus, against Ilion sailed,
And joined his arms, pledged by that oath with them;
Till Priam's broad-wayed city in the end
Fell by his stratagem.

But long being not returned, and passed for dead,
There gathered suitors in his house to woo
His fair wife in his stead;
And strife among them grew.
Nor is his arm more lacked to guard his walls,
Than his good counsel true
To keep peace in his halls.

1 *c*.

Which counsel I reclaim,
Remembered for your use,
Ye wooers, even the same
Which saved from blood and shame
The house of Tyndareus.
So now unto my song your chorus bear,
As Helen's suitors sware.

Chor. 1 *d*.

To keep good peace we swear,
And let that man go free,
Nor do him hurt whate'er,
Whoever wins the fair
And wise Penelope.
Good or ill fortune lieth in the lap
Of Zeus; what haps let hap.

Amph. I thank thee for my father, Phemius

Eur. Thy tale is twice a tale told at this time.

Ctes. I'll hold it, that an oath sung out of tune
Binds not the singer.

Enter Herald.

HERALD.

Tidings, my lords.

Eur. Speak forth.

Her. Be it known the prince Telemachus is come.

[*Suitors rise and murmur.*

Eur. Shame on you. Silence. Sir, we are much rejoiced
To learn the prince's safety. When arrived he?

Her. He landed yestereve. We brought the ship
This morn in harbour.

Eur. Where disbarked the prince?

Her. Northward by Ægilips.

Eur. Is't known?

Her. My lord,
I speed to tell it. [*Exit.*

Eur. Friends, if this be true,
We are baffled.

Ctes. False, 'tis false.

Eur. And nought remains
But man a galley, that shall bear the tidings
To Lord Antinous and his men, who else

Will lie out watching for him in the straits.

Amph. Yet even that pains is spared us. Looking forth
I see two ships in harbour side by side,
And not far off a company of men,
I take to be Antinous and his band.

Ctes. How so?

Amph. See then.

Ctes. O, true: they are at the gate.
How hath it happed?

Amph. Prophesy, sir, and tell us
Whether some god forewarned Telemachus,
Or if they gave him chase and could not catch him.

Enter Antinous and his men.

WOOERS.

Hail, Lord Antinous!

Eur. How went it with thee?

ANTINOUS.

Where is the prince?

Amph. Why, where's the prince? he saith.
Where is the prince?

Eur. How missed you him?

Ant. Curst luck!
All day our scouts kept up unbroken guard

Along the windy headlands, and at night
None slept ashore, but cruising to and fro,
We watched the narrow channels until dawn,
Lying in wait to take him when he came.
And lo! he is here, hath run by into port,
And beached his ship upon the royal stade,
Before we knew it. Curst luck! Have ye seen him?

Eur. Nay, for he landed by the northern shore,
And sent his ship about: a god hath warned him.

Ant. God or no god, plant we before he comes
An ambush in the hills, and slay him there:
For once he reach the town alive, be sure
He is the huntsman then and we the game.
Ay, he hath wit eno' ere he come hither
To babble of our plot, and 'fore the folk
Will, with his pretty face and cunning tears
And speeches of his mother, stir them up
To rise against us. Look, sirs, while he lives
We can do nothing, but if we should kill him,
His lands and goods are ours: we may divide
The wealth and let who will possess the widow.
That is my counsel, lords: but if ye suffer
This baby to return, then this I say—
Make we at once our gifts,—myself I count it
No satisfaction,—but that one of us

Should win at least the dame and such few chattels
As may go with her, is the only credit
We have to look for.

Ctes. What is that to us?

Ant. What say ye, lords?

Amph. Why, 'tis a pretty plan.
We came to woo the dame; but since 'tis clear
All cannot have her, in the general interest
Change we our purpose, saith he, kill the son,
And make division. Well! What say ye, lords?

Ctes. Hark not to him: he hath a specialty.

Amph. Imbrue ye not your hands in innocent blood,
Nor touch Telemachus: for 'tis a thing
Abhorred of Zeus to meddle with a life
Of royal strain. There be the oracles;
Consult ye them: and if Telemachus
Must die and 'tis decreed, I shall be last
Of men to oppose it: otherwise I stand
Against Antinous, ay, sword to sword:
Whose insolence, I say, the gods already
Have baulked and will not suffer.

Eur. Spoken well,
Amphinomus; yet hast thou shewn no way
To avoid the mischief that must fall on us,
If now Telemachus return alive.

Enter from the gallery above, Penelope.

Suitors. The queen, the queen!

PENELOPE.

Ye shameless men, and thou most shamed of all,
Antinous—nay, never think I know not
Because I hold aloof; or that I hear not
Because ye see me not. I know you all,
And none is there among you who more wrongs
The hospitality ye all constrain,
Than that Antinous:—doth he remember
How once his sire Eupeithes to this house
Fled from the people, when they would have slain him
For joining in the Taphian piracies
'Gainst the Thesprotians, who were then our friends
And good allies as now; but my Ulysses
Took him, and by great favour won his life?
And now his son against our noble son
Plotteth to kill him: is all due regard
For sacred ties 'twixt house and house so lost?
That ye too here, who sit in idleness
To waste the substance of my absent lord,
Hark to such insolent and bloody malice,
The while ye sue me for my hand? Pretence!
I say: ye are constant lovers, but 'tis wine
And meat ye love, and me ye only wrong.

Eur. And us thou wrongest, wise Penelope,
Deeming thy son hath not such friends among us,
As make his coming hither and his going
And converse with us safe. If one had dared
To plot his death, this spear, that now is bright,
Were red to-day with blood : for me too, lady,
Hath good Ulysses in the days gone by
Set on his knee, and to my boyish lips
Tendered the wine-cup : wherefore is his son
Dear to my soul, and from no man that moves
Within my reach, need he fear death or harm.

Ctes. (*aside*). Hark to him now!

Ant. (*to Pen.*). We all are bounden, lady,
To serve thy house ; and I above the rest
Have shewn my zeal, sailing my galley forth
To meet thy son with honour, and in safety
To escort him home.

Pen. Standing but late above
I overheard your council ; look, I bid you
Depart, lest on a sudden ye encounter
Him whom ye willed to slay. The gods have brought him
In safety home : he will be here ; so ye
Go to your lodges, nor to-morrow morn
Come as your wont, unless ye bring in hand
Each of you, for a pledge of truth and peace,

Some gift of price. Strange suitors are ye, lying
Here at my charges, feasting day by day,
Nor ever make such offerings as a woman
Must look for where she is loved or wooed: begone.
My son hath passed the town. I have a message
He will be here. (*Voices without.*) Ay, now, before ye go
He is come. I hear him.

Enter Telemachus, spear in hand at back; the wooers throng round him as he presses forward.

Eur. Welcome, noble prince.

Amph. All hail, Telemachus! *Ant.* The gods be praised.

Chor. Hail, noble offspring of a noble sire!—
Most gracious son of a most gracious lady!— 1140
Dear to our eyes as is the light of morn—
Welcome as softest rain to new-sown fields—

Ctes. (*aside*). Or like a frost in spring.

TELEMACHUS.

My lords and friends,
I thank you all. (*To Pen.*) See me returned, dear mother.

Pen. Welcome, my son. I knew that thou wert come:
'Tis good. (*Aside to Telem.*) I had now discharged these lords: I pray thee
Rid us their company.

Tel. My friends, I fear
My entrance, just as ye were stood to go,
Delays your going: feel not such constraint,
Beseech you. We may look to meet again,
If I mistake not.
Ant. (*aside to wooers*). See how haughtily
He bears himself.
Ctes. (*aside*). Yield not an inch: abide!
Eur. My lords, let all depart.
Amph. (*to Pen.*). Lady, farewell,
To-morrow I will offer at thy feet
The best I have.
All. And I, and I.
Pen. Farewell.
Tel. Farewell, my lords.
Ant. Would I might stay to see the melting joy
Of this most happy meeting.
Pen. Go thy way.
If ever grace spake false, 'twas on thy tongue,
Falsest Antinous.
Suitors (*going*). Farewell, Farewell.
[*They are heard singing without.* To keep good peace
we swear, etc.]
Tel. My dearest mother.
Pen. O, my noble son,
'Tis joy to kiss thee. Do I see thee safe?

But O, thou hast tarried long! And was it kind
To make thy journey hence without a word?
If thou couldst but have seen my pain, the day
I found thee gone, thy pity had surely made
Thy duty, and held thee back. But now to see thee,
And as thou camest those rude men abashed,—
O, I was proud!

Tel. Thou canst not more rejoice
Than I.

Pen. I wonder not they were abashed; 1170
Thou hast a freer step, a manlier bearing.
I am much to blame keeping thee here at home,
Away from fellowship of noble spirits.
Whom hast thou seen?

Tel. Why that were long to tell.

Pen. I saw thy ship sail in, and then there came
Eumæus, saying how thou wert with him,
And wouldst not come: then came thy messenger,
That thou wert in the town, and on thy way.
How was it?

Tel. See, I am just escaped with life:
Spare questioning. First let the gods be served: 1180
Go bid thy maidens, ere the night close in,
Prepare a worthy sacrifice to Zeus;
Ay, such a sacrifice, as to this day
This house has never seen.

Pen. 'Tis very meet.
Yet why this urgence? there hath something passed
Thou keepest back. Is't possible, my boy,
That in the southern courts some lady's eyes
Have drawn thee to vow hecatombs?
Tel. Nay, mother.
Pen. I should be glad. What is it then hath changed thee?
Tel. How am I changed?
Pen. Thou art aloof and strange.
Tel. It ever dulled my kinder spirits to view
These robbers in my father's hall.
Pen. Alas!
What could I do, my son, and thou away?
Here is no change, nor ever any tidings.
I have neither power nor reason on my side:
I cannot say My lord is yet alive,
Wherefore depart, ye wrong me; nor as little
My lord is dead, I will requite your honour,
And choose the worthiest. O, where'er thou hast been,
If aught thou hast learned of any certainty,
Speak now, whate'er it be, fear not to tell:
Tell of thy sire, my son, though 'tis his death!
Tel. Now heaven forbid that word.
Pen. Alas, Telemachus;
What is our hope? Or if thou know of any,

Why art thou reticent of it?

Tel. Hearken, mother:
If thou wilt hear me, I will tell my story,
As time allows, stripped of all circumstance.
First sailed I then to Pylos, where I found
Nestor, who lovingly my stay entreated,
And held me as his son, but, when he learned
My quest, and nothing knew of my dear father,
Would have me go, and with a royal escort
Conveyed me to the court of Menelaus:
There I saw Argive Helen.—
But Menelaus, when I told my tale
Brake out in anger, and I think few words
Would draw him hither with his dukes to sweep
Our house of its dishonour; but in fine
Thus much he said, that still Ulysses lived,
But with the nymph Calypso in her isle
By subtle sleights withheld; in whom it lay
That he was not returned, and might not yet,
But there abode. Then, since he knew no more,
I sped me home, and should have sped to death,
Had not divine Athenè sent a dream
To warn me of the ambush, with the wind
To bring me round the isle: wherefore I bid thee
Perform the sacrifice, lest for such favour
We seem ungrateful.

Pen. Didst thou never ask
Of Menelaus, how he came to know
Thy father's fate?
Tel. It was the wizard Proteus,
Whom strangely he entamed and all his art,
When he lay windbound in the isle of Pharos;
Who told him, for he held him fast for all
His magic shifts and slippery changefulness,
Becoming first a bearded lion, thereafter
A snake, a leopard, and a bristly boar;
And then as running water seemed he, or
A tall and flowering tree . . .
Pen. My son, my son,
These are mere tales. When was this said to have been?
Tel. 'Twas scarce two years.
Pen. Ah, and so long!
Tel. 'Tis tidings
Both sure and good, mother; and yet 'tis nought
To what remains. The thing I sought abroad
Has come to me at home: but if I tell thee,
Thou in thine inmost heart store it,—no word
Even to Eumæus, tho' 'twas in his hut,
—Where as I crossed the isle I turned aside,—
I found an aged man, his beggar guest:
Whom, for Eumæus warned me he was full

Of tales of Troy, I held of no account
When first he spoke, but soon I learnt he knew.
He was himself at Troy, and, as he saith,
Hath lately seen my father, who is free,
And bent on swift return.

Pen. Is this thy news?

Tel. Is't not then news?

Pen. Nay, nay, thou art deceived.
An idle tale Eumæus would not hear;
A rogue he warned thee of, and not the first
That thus hath lied.

Tel. There hath been none like him.

Pen. Their tale is still the same, and spiced to match
Any credulity.

Tel. I would not have
Thy mind less wary, nor bespeak thy credit.
To-morrow I will bring him here, and then,
He being our guest, thyself mayst question him.
And be thou not persuaded, I will look
No longer for my father's wished return;
Nor after lend an ear to any man,
But hold him as our enemy, who saith
Ulysses lives.

Pen. In hoping and despairing
Thou art too quick, my son; and past occasions
Have taught thee nought. Come, tell me of thyself,

And of thy journey. Tell me too of Helen,
Is she still beautiful? and doth she live
Forgiven of Menelaus and beloved?

Tel. In good time, mother, shalt thou hear all this,
And more. Consider now how best to prove
This beggar, when I bring him.

Pen. If need were
'Twere easy.—Yet, how should Eumæus err?
Hath he not means to sift the false from true?
Could such a guest as this thou deemest dwell
With him unknown?

Tel. Thou shalt thyself enquire.
Weigh well what proof to use, but now no longer
Delay the sacrifice my safety calls. [*Going.*

Pen. My son!

Tel. Adieu, I go into the town.

Pen. Why wilt thou go?

Tel. First I must make report
To good Noëmon of his ship returned;
Then to pay off my crew.

Pen. Ah, prithee son,
Have care: the robbers have a plot to kill thee:
They now may lie in wait. 'Tis early dusk.

Tel. I fear them not.

Pen. Indeed I know their minds.

Tel. The goddess will withhold their impious hands.

Pen. What goddess trustest thou to aid thee so?
Tel. Why who but she that hath preserved my sire?
Pen. Alas! Then take Eumæus with thee, son.
Tel. I need him not. Farewell.
Pen. Then if thou goest,
Farewell. But do not tarry.
Tel. Bid prepare
My chamber; for at night I shall return. [*Exit.*
Pen. The gods protect thee.—Would the gods, that made him
So handsome, loving, noble, brave, and good,
Had given him wisdom; for without that gift,
Grace bears no fruit. 'Tis plain to all, my son
Hath not the truth of his advertisement:
He wears the semblance only, such as lures
And flatters the deceiver. If I am vexed,
'Tis with myself: I looked for better things
And suffer in rebuff. That Menelaus,
The delicate, self-seeking Menelaus,
Should leave his easeful home to avenge a friend,
And that friend dead: and then the wizard tales,
Calypso and Proteus, and whatever else,
And worst of all this ancient beggar-man,
Who hath a tale better than all the tales!
Alas, alas! my son, thou wilt have need
Of much good care. 'Twas ill I did not send

Eumæus with him. Now till he return,
Patience—and when he is returned, again
Patience—'tis so: patience was made for me;
And one by one my deprecative days
Bring nought, but as they flee, still cry to-morrow.

ACT IV

The same: many wooers seated about the hall over remains of feast. In front of stage TELEMACHUS (L.), *EURYMACHUS* (C.), *AMPHINOMUS and ANTINOUS* (R.). *Phemius sitting near: at left of stage a table piled with gifts.*

EURYMACHUS.

ORDER thou as thou wilt; with mine own hand
Will I present my gift.

ANTINOUS.

And so will I.
Shall there be no distinction?

TELEMACHUS.

Sirs, consider
How ye would make distinction. Ye are many,
And acquiescence in a preference
Of two or three were the self-forfeiture
By all the rest of further claim in suit.

AMPHINOMUS.

Hark, 'tis well said, Eurymachus; and for one

I were content.

Eur. Why this is nought to me.
All cannot give; but we and such beside,
Whose title we acknowledge, may present
Our gifts in person: let the rest lay theirs
Here on the table: nor will we admit
More than are present now within the hall:
All others with the henchmen may remain,
Where they sit feasting, in the outer court.

Ant. So be it, I say.

Eur. 'Twas on her own demand
We brought our gifts to-day: shall we not give them?

Ant. 'Tis fit there be reception. Here we wait
Since noon, and still she comes not. Will she come?

Tel. I am here, my lords, to tell you she will come.
Prepare to see her.

Eur. My place is first: ye two
Will follow. For the rest, is't left to me
To fix the order?

Amph. I would urge to abide
By what the prince desires.

Tel. Nay, nay, my lords.
I waive all word: the matter rests with you.
I say but this: since 'tis not possible
That each in person should present his gift,
My mother's will is that ye lay them here

Upon the table. Yet if one or two
Command distinction, there is nought so far
Forbids exception.

Eur. Lords, then sit we down;
Thence may we pass the word to whom we will.
And say that while we wait our lady's coming,
Good Phemius sing. Prince, wilt thou sit by me?

Tel. Nay, I will take my seat where I was wont.

[*They sit down.*

Eur. Serve us some wine.

Tel. Phemius, I'd have thy song
Tell of my father.

Music. (*All are seated.*)

Enter Eumæus with Ulysses disguised.

EUMÆUS.

This way, old man, now art thou in the hall
Of good Ulysses.

Eur. Stay, stay, who come here
Breaking the music.

Ant. 'Tis the wretched swineherd.

Eur. Prince, bid him hence!

Ant. What ruffian brings he with him?

Amph. Who is this ancient patch?

Ant. O miserable
Tatterdemalion!

CTESIPPUS.

What a scurvy beggar!

Eur. Eumæus, I bid thee take thy plague away!

A suitor. Nor want we thee to-day, old swine-driver.

Another. When the meat fails, we'll send.

Ctes. Rascally knave.

Another. Go fat thy pigs!

Ctes. The hog-tub stands without:
If thy old man be hungry, take him there.

Another. Ctesippus, force them forth.

Ctes. Begone, I say:
Or I will drive you quicker than ye came.

Eur. Eumæus, hear me: take thy man away.

Eum. Nay, Lord Eurymachus, 'tis never thou
Canst say begone to any from this hall,
Nay, nor Antinous nor Ctesippus either:
But if to me ye say it, ye forget
How I stand here of right; nor is it like
I stir for you. As for your music-making,
Be still yourselves, and we can sit in peace,
And listen with you.

Ant. Ye to sit with us,
Insolent villain!

Eur. Whatsoe'er thy right,
This filthy beggar is beyond all reason.

Who is he?

Eum. Lord Eurymachus, this man,
Mean as he is, hath here more privilege
Than thou. He comes by invitation hither;
He is the prince's suppliant.

Eur. Now, Telemachus,
Thou art reproached in this.

Eum. Come to reproach,
I know a word.

Ant. Wag not thy beard at us,
Thou low-bred hind.

Tel. Indeed, Eurymachus,
I am not disgraced; for in my father's hall
Was ever room and welcome for all such
As needed food and shelter: nay, and they
Who most have need stand first; as doth this man.
As for my servant, he hath given an answer
To those that have reviled him.

Amph. If so be
This beggar is thy guest and suppliant,
His fitter place were still the outer court:
Invite him thither.

Tel. I have bid him here.
And here he shall remain. Fear not, good father,
Go sit thee by the hearth: and thou, Amphinomus,
Urge me not. I will have my way in this:

Were there no other reason than this one,
That I will have my way. Take thou that stool,
Old man, and sit at ease: none here can touch thee.
Ctes. (*to Ul. aside*). Dare!
Ant. (*to Eur.*). Shall we brook this?
Eur. Prince Telemachus,
Though thou be very son of great Ulysses,
Think not to overrule us thus with words.
Dispose thou mayst within fair reason's bounds
Even as thou wilt: so much in courtesy
We grant, but not for fear; nor are our spirits
Of stuff to suffer what indignities
Thy haughty temper may prepare. In this
We shall resist thee.
Tel. There be men in Ithaca
Call thee not king, Eurymachus; though here
Thou take so much on thee.
Ant. Ha! threat'st thou us?
Telemachus! what next? This is't to have been
In Lacedæmon. Now may we, who ne'er
Have looked upon the godlike Menelaus,
Behold his mirror. Why, what game is this?
Think'st thou with strength and might upon our side
We bandy words? I say this ragged loon
Shall not have place with us: the sight of him
Hath turned my stomach. If for any bond

Of blood or service thou set store by him,
Thou mayst do better for his skinny bones
Than stow them here. 'Twill not be many hours
That he shall trouble us.

Tel. Ay, so may be.
But wouldst thou kill him, Lord Antinous,
It had been better to have waylaid his ship,
Or set an ambush for him in the hills.

Ant. (*aside*). By heaven, I smart.

Eur. Peace, peace!

Amph. Hark, if the prince
Persist, we may not say him nay. Be seated.
Maybe our lady's voice may interpose.
Let us defer our grievance to the word
Of sage Penelope.

Ant. How shall I sit
In presence of such insult?

Eur. Sit thou down.

Ant. (*aside to Ul.*). Man, as thou lovest life, fly while thou mayst.

ULYSSES (*to Ant.*).
Kind sir, I am deaf.

Ant. I'll make thee deafer yet.

Tel. Phemius, we listen. Sit thou there, old man.
Eumæus, take him meat and wine.

Ul. (*sitting at r. front*). I thank thee.

Ctes. Go further off, I pray; I'm not thy friend,
Thou hoary plague.

Eur. Silence, the music sounds.

(*Eumæus bears food to Ulysses, who eats and drinks during Phemius' ode.*)

PHEMIUS.

1.

Happy are the earth's heirs:
Who, that his toilsome lot
And hard-won gain compares,
Admires and envies not?
At one time one, at another another best,
Come mortal pleasures, troubling sweet content;
But two above the rest
Are ever of worth,
Everywhere are praisèd and excellent,
To live and possess the earth:
And my name—ranked desire 'mong graven things—
Would live with the island kings.

2.

Happy Telemachus then art thou,
Ithaca's true-born lord:
Rejoice and welcome him now
Safe to his home restored.

Shout—O well is thee!
The gods in worship and joy, pray we,
—And high desert uplifts the prayer—
Grant thee here in plenty the good thou meritest,
Nor to fall in a like snare
With him from whom thou inheritest,
Ulysses, Laertes' son.

1 *a*.

Twenty are the years gone
Since in another's strife,
To win a faithless wife
He vexed the true, his own.
For her new-married he left and his newborn boy,
His true-born prince to manhood now upgrown,
To fight at fateful Troy.
In front of the strife
Fought he, and fell not there, nor lies entombed
By mighty Achilles' side;
Nor yet returned he home, but wandering wide
To alien death was doomed.

2 *a*.

Weep for him, ye that around his board
Sit in the bright fire-shine:
No more shall Ithaca's lord
Stretch his hand to the wine.

Sing a mournful strain!
Alas, he counteth not loss nor gain;
His wife is wooed, and he makes no sign;
Thralls go here and there, but another beckoneth.
For the dead hath no desire,
He knoweth nothing, nor reckoneth;
He is cold, and feels not the fire.
[*He plays sad music in silence.*

Enter suddenly Penelope (*with some six maids attendant*).

Ul. (*aside*). I see the beacon of my life undimmed.

PENELOPE.

Hush ye these mournful strains!—'tis music's skill
To comfort and wean sorrow's heart away
With beautiful distractions from its woe:
Not to be plunged therein, and chafe remembrance
With added echoes. Oh, I have wept enough.
Would you my life should faster waste in grief,
That ye must widen more its aching channels
With melancholy dirges? These are fit
For souls at ease; ay, such as ye, my lords,
Who feel no thorns prick you, may love to drink
The soft compunctious mimicries of woe.
But me with all your pleasures still ye vex,
In mine own house, forgetful of my wounds.

—And thou, whom servest thou, Phemius, that thy mistress
Thou disobeyest?

Ul. (*aside*). Spoke like a goddess.

Tel. 'Twas at my command.
Forgive me, mother.

Pen. Thou wert used, I think,
To know me better, son.

Tel. If thou art come
To take the presents which thy wooers bring,
See where they lie.

Ul. (*aside*). Now what to say?

Pen. My lords, the prince hath shewn me
These gifts: they are well my due, and some amends
For your continual spending, which to grudge
Were unbecoming, were this house my own.

Ul. (*aside*). That is well said: now may she fairly spoil them.

Pen. But since I keep it for its absent lord . . .

Ul. (*aside*). Good.

Eur. Oh, lady, he is dead.

Pen. How know'st thou so?

Ul. (*aside*). Well asked.

Amph. Sagest Penelope, thou triflest still.
The time is fled when hope might yet imagine
Thy husband lived: so long to have sent no word

Is surest tidings: if Ulysses lived
He would be here.
Ul. (*aside*). True, sir.
Amph. Thy needful patience
Have all admired: perpetual widowhood
The gods and we forbid. To make an end
Of all that thou mislikest in our suit,
Is but the boon we crave: choose one of us,
Whoe'er it be—to-day.
Pen. Would all of ye
Assent to this?
Ant. Ay, wherefore sit we here?
Pen. Indeed, my lords, ye best know why ye came.
Eur. Worshipful lady, if but all the Achæans
Who speak thy name could now behold and hear thee,
Then not this house, nay, nor this island's round,
Would hold thy thronging wooers, by so far
Outshinest thou all women of the earth
In beauty and in wisdom.
Pen. Still too wise
To fall to flattery; but my grace and favour
The gods destroyed that day the Argives sailed
'Gainst Ilion, and bore hence with them my lord:
But should he come to rule again his house,
Fairer than ever then my fame would be
For all this grief and the thick thrusts of fate.

But he, in farewell ere he left his home,
Took my right hand in his, and said to me,
Dear wife, we must not think the Achæan army
Will all, as they set forth, return from Troy,
In numbers and in bravery safe and sound:
Our foes are warriors skilled in spear and bow,
And horsemen good, say they, such as most quickly
Are wont in equal fight to turn the day;
Wherefore I know not what may be my hap:
But, come the worst, thou here must guard the house,
And aye to sire and mother both be kind 1551
As now, or more, since I shall be away.
And should I not return to thee, abide
Until thou seest our babe upgrown and bearded,
When marry whom thou wilt and quit the house.
'Twas thus he spake, and thus 'tis come about:
And not far off that night of hateful marriage
Confronts me now; for Zeus hath killed my hope.
But ye add pain and anger to my grief,
Who come not in the manner of our sires 1560
To woo, when every man that wooed a lady
Of substance, rank, and worth, vied with his equals
In gifts of flocks and herds, and banqueted
All the bride's household, offering of his own;
Not wasting as do ye the house ye seek,
And without recompense.

Ant. See then our gifts.

Pen. Ay, true: to where your late amendment lies.
Let us o'erlook these offerings, ere my maids
Bear them away.

Eur. But first, O queen,
Take at my hands the gift I bring,
This yellow-glistening chain,—whereof
The amber beads may tell my love,
The mesh of golden work between,
The homage of my wealth may show,—
Worthy of any neck but thine:
No lover, mortal nor divine,
Who made so fair an offering,
But might with pride his gift bestow;
Tho' not to thee Eurymachus.
Yet 'tis the best and richest thing
Of countless jewels rich and fine,
Stored in his house; and wouldst thou make
The rest thine own, he for love's sake
Were not ashamed in giving thus.

Pen. My thanks: 'tis brave and sweet attire.
Long hath thy wealth been known to me,
And grateful would thy marriage be
Both to my brethren and my sire.
What have we here?

Ant. Lady, my gift.

This ample robe my servants bear,
White as the snow's fresh-wandered drift,
Light as the air and beautiful,
Is woven of the softest wool
Our curly highland chilvers wear;
Fresh from the loom: and on the robe
Twelve golden brooches, globe to globe,
With fretted clasps of Syrian art,
Which, brought by war to Egypt's mart,
From thence—with many gawds beside,
Now mine—my grandsire took, when he,
Crossing in ship the Libyan sea,
Sailed up the mighty river wide;
But these for beauty stood alone.

Pen. I thank thee. This I'll not deny
For some misdeeds may well atone.
Who cometh next?

Amph. Lady, 'tis I:
And give my homage one kind word,
I shall not scorn to come but third.
My offering is this veil.

Pen. O wondrous work and rare!
'Tis like the golden mail
Of Hera's braided hair,
Which every step sets hovering,
Her brow discovering.

Amph. So 'tis most fit for thee,
Rarest Penelope.
Pen. Or such methinks love's queen
Across her forehead tieth,
Whene'er along the green
Of river-banks she hieth,
To cheer with sweet embraces
Her sister graces.
Amph. Therefore most fit for thee,
Queenly Penelope.
Pen. Oh, 'tis most fine: I thank thee. Is't thy meaning
That I should wear the veil?
Amph. 'Twould deck thee well.
Ul. (*aside*). Here is some favour shewn.
Pen. My gracious thanks.
A suitor. See now my gift, O queen.
Ul. (*aside to Amph.*). Sir, I would speak with thee.
Amph. Nay, man; be silent.—
Pen. Ah, 'tis Peisander, what brings he?
The suitor. Lady, if ever thou didst see
Three dewdrops gathered full within
Some unawakened lily's cup,
Each swollen to fall, or e'er begin
The stalks to dress themselves aright:
For yet the sun, that hasteth up,

Pricks not their delicate stems,
Nor spreads the crimson petals bright:
That were an image of the gems
Which in this casket lie, a pair
Fit for thine ears to wear.

Pen. I thank thee, good Peisander; set it down
Here with the rest.

Ul. (*aside to Amph.*). Sir, I would speak with thee.

Amph. (*to Ul.*). Nay, stand aloof.—

Pen. Ye do me honour, lords;
Yet must reception end. I will take all,
And note the givers. Now my constant grief
Is strangely awakened. (*To maids.*) Gather up the gifts.

Ul. (*aside to Amph.*). Sir! speak with me.

Amph. (*to Ul.*). What wouldst thou?

Ant. See, the rogue
Begins to beg.

Eur. Lady, ere yet thou go,
Grant me thine ear. There is come into he hall
A beggar, who for mere propriety [*Ul. sits.*
We would were housed without. The prince, thy son,
Against our general comfort bids him here.
Let thy kind favour spare us this annoyance.

Pen. That is he?

Eur. Ay.

Ant. Lo! by the fire he sits.

Pen. (*aside*). How strange a man. (*To Tel.*) Is this
thy guest, my son?
Tel. 'Tis he I spoke of.
Pen. (*to Tel.*). Surely the complaint
Hath a fair ground. To save offence 'twere best
Dismiss him with some gift—I leave, my lords,
This matter where it lies: My son rules here.
Farewell. Keep peace amongst you.
(*To maids.*) Bear off the gifts. [*Exit.*
All. Farewell, fairest Penelope.
Eur. Ere now we sit again,
I ask the prince once more if he persist
To vex our party with this beggar's presence.
Tel. Press me not, lords, ye know my will: and how
In night and darkness should I turn away
A houseless guest? Nay, but for you 'tis time
Ye sought your lodges.
Ant. (*to Eum.*). Thou presumptuous swineherd,
Why drovest thou this nuisance to the town?
Had we not tramps and scamps eno', starved beggars
And needy scavengers, haunting the place,
Ravening thy master's substance, that thou now
Must fetch in this one too?
Eum. Antinous,
Thou speak'st not fair, lord tho' thou be; that here
Set at another's board wouldst judge and grudge

The spending of thy host. I know that thou
Art like the world, who bid unto their tables
But such as can repay them well in kind,
Or by some service or amusement made;
And none will ever ask a beggar-man
To help him eat. Thou too wast always hard
Above all here to all, and most to me.
But I care not, while my dear gracious mistress
Dwells with the prince, my master.
Tel. (*aside to Eum.*). Hush, Eumæus;
Truth is the hardest taunt to bear.
Ant. Thou hind!
Answerest thou me?
Tel. I laugh, Antinous,
To have thee play the master in this house.
Bid me dismiss my guest? The gods forfend!
Thee rather bid I help to entertain him.
Lo! thou hast feasted well: give off thy plate
Thy leavings to this beggar. Go, old man,—
These lords can of their surplus well afford
To furnish thee a supper,—go, I charge thee,
And take what each may give.
Ant. By Zeus in heaven,
Thou bear'st me hard. If all but give as I,
He shall not make the round.
Ul. (*coming to Ant.*). Sir, give me somewhat.

Thou comest, I warrant, of no common stock,
But of some great house: thou'rt featured like a king:
Thou wilt not stint thy hand: and, treat me well,
It lies in chance I yet may make return.
For I too once had my own house, and lived
In state, nor e'er turned any from my doors,
Whoever he might be, whate'er his need.
I had my slaves and thralls, and all in plenty,
That rich men have; but Zeus made nought of all:
For his will surely 'twas, who sent me forth
With wandering pirates, sailing up the river
Of Egypt, a long voyage—and to my ruin:
For tarrying there, my crews in mutiny
Brake from me, and doing bloody violence
Unto the people of the king, were slain,
And I enslaved. But of the king's good pleasure,
With whom I lacked not favour, I was sent
In time to Cyprus . . .

Ant. Plague thee and thy lies!
Stand off, back from my table; lest thou come
To a bitter Egypt, and a mournful Cyprus.
Begone, I say.

Ul. Lo! now I see thou lackest
Wisdom unto thy beauty. Of thine own
Thou wouldst not give away a pinch of salt,
Since thou withholdest here what costs thee nothing.

Ant. Then take what I would give thee ere thou go. [*Strikes him.*

Ul. Ha! wilt thou strike me!—Why, and even a blow
Thou giv'st not well.

Amph. Shame, shame!

Eur. Enough, Antinous.

Eum. To strike a man so old, thy fellow-guest!
Come back, good father, to thy seat.

Ul. Now, hear me,
Ye wooers of the queen, for I will speak.
Many hard blows in honourable fight
I have borne, and held them nought; but to be smitten
For being an-hungered, tho' the hurt be small
'Tis huge in wrong; and as there is a god
To avenge the poor, I say this ill-bred lord
Shall never live to see his marriage day.

Eum. And so say I.

Ant. Now for thy paltry curse
Think thyself lucky I bid not my men
Hale thee without, and flay thee with their whips.

Some wooers (*murmuring*). How will Antinous woo our queen,
Having his hand accursed with shame?—
Doth he forget the gods have been
In such disguise?—How Zeus once came

Thus to Lycaon's feast unbid:—
Or how in Celeus' house, 'tis said,
Demeter at Eleusis hid?—
And were he but a man, 'tis dread
To smite in wrath the hoary head.
Amph. Father, I bring thee meat. May happiness
Ere long be thine, for what thou sufferest now.
Ul. (*reseated at front, to Amph.*). I thank thee,
lord Amphinomus, and since
I see thee like thy father, wise and good,
Old Nisus of Dulichium, I will say
What thrice thou hast refused to hear: Attend.
Of all that moves and breathes upon the earth,
Nóthing is found more únstáble than man.
Awhile his spirit within him is gay, his limbs
Light, and he saith, No ill shall overtake me.
Then evil comes: and lo! he beareth it
Patiently, in its turn as God provides.
So I too once looked to be ever happy,
And gave the rein to wantonness, and now—
Thou seest me . . . Wherefore, say I, let no man
Be lawless, but in quiet and reserve
Possess whatever good the gods have sent.
And this I witness 'gainst the deeds I see,
These wooers, full of mischief, making waste,
And doing such dishonour to a lady,

Whose lord not long will tarry: nay, I tell thee
He is very near,—ay, near. May thy good genius
Withdraw thee soon, lest thou shouldst meet his wrath
When he returns: for not without blood-spilling
Will they be sundered, these infatuate wooers
And he, when he comes stepping thro' his house.

Eur. What saith this ancient seer, that makes thy brow
To cloud?

Ul. (*aside to Amph.*). Fly hence to-night.

Amph. Ill hath been done him:
Shew him more kindness.

Eur. Why, methinks I see
A fine celestial glory on his crown,
So brightly gleams the torchlight on it: nay,
And never a hair at all. (*To Ul.*) Old man, 'tis true
Thou'rt out at elbows; wilt thou earn a living,
I'll take thee on. If thou canst gather stones
Or trench, I'll find thee wages and good food,
Ay, and a coat and shoes: but well I know
Thou'rt practised but in sloth, or if thou bend
Thy body, 'tis in louting thro' the land
To beg thy bellyful.

Ul. Now, lord Eurymachus,
I would that there might be a trial of labour
'Twixt us in springtide, when the days grow long,

In the deep grass; and I would have my scythe,
And thou another, striking blow for blow,
Fasting from dawn till dark: Or give us each
A plow, and for a team four sturdy oxen,
Frammard and toward to break up between us
A stubble of thirty acres; thou shouldst see
If I could veer out straight: Or would, I say,
That Zeus would send us war,—I care not whence,—
To-day;—then set a helmet on my brows,
And give me in either hand a spear and shield;
Thou shouldst not taunt me with my belly then.
Now art thou merely insolent and rough,
Because thy fellows are so few and feeble:
And if Ulysses came and faced thee here,
Those doors, wide as they are, would seem too small
And narrow for thee, in thy haste to fly.

Eur. Try thou their width then.

[*Throws a stool and hits Ctesippus.*

Ctes. Gods, my head!

Amph. By me, old man.

Ctes. (*to Eur.*). Now curse thee for a fool.
Take it back, thus: (*throws*) and mend thy aim.

Eur. Ctesippus!

Tel. My lords, my lords!

Eur. Thy pardon, good Ctesippus!

Ctes. In time: thou'st broke my head.

Ant. By heaven, this beggar
Grows to be some one: let us drive him forth.
Amph. Peace, peace!
Ant. See where he stands.
Eur. (*to Amph.*). Wilt thou protect him?
Tel. Lords, are ye mad? The god disturbs your wits.
Else what ye have drunk declares 'tis time ye part.
Ant. Then list to me. Let us begone, but first
Rouse we the game: start we this beggar hence,
And hunt him at the spear-point thro' the town.
With me for sport!
Some wooers. Hie there, hie! Tally ho!
Eum. Not if I die for it.
Amph. Fools! Give o'er.
Tel. Now, lords,
What keeps you back?

Re-enter suddenly Penelope with maids.

Pen. Shame, shame! what vile and drunken brawl is this,
That reaching to my chamber, brings me down
At mid of night in fear lest in your revels
Ye stain my floors with blood? Ah, now ye are shamed.
How rose this sudden uproar 'mongst you, lords?

Honour ye not my son, that in his presence,
The morrow of his return, ye are broken forth
In more disordered noise than e'er before?
If ye respect not him, me ye respect:
Who answers for you?

Ant. That impertinent swineherd . . .

Eur. The wretch I spake of . . .

Ctes. Nay, Eurymachus,
'Twas thou as much.

Pen. Speak one for all.

Eur. O lady,
Thy son hath fetched a beggar in to mock us.

Pen. Telemachus, what is it?

Tel. Of this riot
The whole occasion lies but with these lords;
Who have raised their hands to strike their fellow-guest,
And as thou cam'st were risen to drive him forth.

Pen. I know not, sirs, what sort of man this is,
That so hath stirred your wrath: but be ye sure
That shelter offered here is shelter given.
Yet at your instance I will take upon me
To make enquiry, and will give your wishes
All fair allowance, as my older guests.
Meanwhile depart: ye have feasted long: depart:
'Tis time indeed: I bid you all good-night.

Eur. The queen has spoken, lords; depart at once.

Ant. The villain will escape us yet.

Ctes. He shall not,
If he go forth to-night.

Ant. And if he stay,
To-morrow I will serve him.

Tel. Lords, depart!

Ant. Fare thee well, prince; I shall return at morn.

Wooers. Good-night, rarest Penelope.—
Fair queen of Ithaca, good-night.— [*Going.*

Eur. Until to-morrow, fairest queen, adieu. [*Exit.*

Pen. (*to Eum.*). Eumæus, hither; who is this old man?

Eum. Why 'tis a strange old man, and full of lies:
Yet 'tis an honest and a wise old man.

Pen. How full of lies and honest?

Eum. Gracious madam,
I have looked on many men, and by their gait
And voice and eyes are honest men well known;
And this old man is such: but when he speaks
Such floods of words run o'er his aged lips,
Ay, and such tales,—and ever when he draws
To make conclusion, 'tis the same old fable,
That he hath seen the master, that the master
Will soon return:—therefore I say he lies.

Pen. Hath he been with us long?

Eum. 'Twas yestermorn
He came.

Pen. Enough. Thou mayst go home. Good-night.

Eum. Good-night, my lady. [*Exit.*

Pen. O my son, my son;
I think that years and use, which perfect others,
Serve but to blunt thy reason: as a child
Thou hadst a shrewder wit, and quick enough;
But now, when any man to look on thee
Would say that thou wert some one, thy behaviour
Would blast his praise.

Tel. Tell me what ill I have done.

Pen. What thou hast done? My heart was full of hope;
I looked for thy return as happiness,
How hast thou dashed it. I had well forgot
The empty tales thou broughtest me for tidings,
Nor marked the fault, seeing thy zeal in love
Outrun thy judgment: but when thou hast invited
Thy man to be our guest, and canst not then
Protect him: this is shame.

Tel. Mother, I think
To do a wrong is shame: to suffer wrong
Asks not for pardon.

Pen. Ay, but what to do?
Thy guest hath been insulted: hast thou power

To punish that? and of the two reproaches,
To suffer it again, or to dismiss,
As must be, him to whom thou offeredst shelter,
I know not which is worse.

Tel. Wilt thou dismiss
The herald of such hope?

Pen. Eumæus saith
His tales are lies.

Tel. Speak with him but thyself: 1890
Make proof thyself: if thou be not persuaded,
He shall not bide the night. Nay, if he lies,
Let him go starve. See, I will bring thee to him.

Pen. If so thou wilt. (*To maids.*) Maidens, begone. [*Exeunt maids.*

Tel. Old man,
The words which thou hast told me, now make good
Unto my honoured mother. [*Exit.*

Pen. Thou strange old man, whose thin and sorry rags
Speak thee no friend of heaven; whose many years
Find thee a wanderer in a foreign land;
Who art thou, I will ask, and with what tale 1900
Winning my son, thou comest to the house
Of good Ulysses, and to me his wife
Pretendest tidings of my long-lost lord?

Ul. O lady, there is none in all the world
Would blame the word thou sayest, so fair thy fame:
Nay, for thy spirit is gentle: yet ask me not
Thus of myself, for I have seen much woe:
And tears might flood my face; till thou perchance
Shouldst think my temper soft, or drowned in wine.
Pen. Whate'er my fame, stranger, it lacketh much
In losing of my lord; if he were here
Then I were proud. But 'tis of him we speak.
Tell me then whence thou art, and what thou knowest.
Ul. If tell I must: there is a beauteous isle,
Which men call Crete, washed by the Libyan sea:
Ninety fair cities hath it, and the men
Who dwell there are of various race, Achæans,
Cydonians, Dorians, and Pelasgians,
Beside the native Cretan. There is Gnossus,
Where Minos dwelt, and took his law from Zeus:
He was my grandsire, and Deucalion
His son, my father, had another son
Idomeneus, elder and better gifted
Than I, who am callèd Æthon. Now it happed,
That when not many days, Idomeneus
Had sailed away for Troy, thy lord Ulysses,
Bound thither too, was driven aside to Crete,
And sheltered at Amnisos; and when thence
He sent up heralds to the king, as one

Whose welcome was assured, it fell to me
To play awhile my elder brother's part,
And entertain him and his men. Twelve days
He stayed, for even so long the mad North wind
Abated not, but with such fury blew
That far from putting out, they scarce could keep
Their feet on land: but on the thirteenth day
It fell, and let them forth to sail for Troy.

Pen. Friend then, if so thou art, that courtesy
Thus royal shewedst to my lord, forgive
My thought to prove thee, if indeed these things
Were as thou sayest. When thou sawest my lord,
How was he clad, and what lords followed him?

Ul. Lady, 'tis hard with such a time between
To say—'tis twenty years; and yet, methinks,
My memory shows him to me, as he was.
Thy lord Ulysses wore a purple robe
Of double woof, and on the golden brooch,
Which two pins held, was wrought a rare device;
A hound that had o'ertaken a hunted fawn,
Stood on't and gazed: and none who saw the work
But marvelled, so was nature done to life.
The linen too about his neck was bright,
And fine in tissue as the silvery coat,
Which the lithe snake among the withered grass
Leaves off unrent. Ay, and his squire I see,

A man round-shouldered, tanned, and curly-haired,
Eurybates, that was his name; and him
Ulysses loved and honoured 'bove the rest.
Pen. Now, stranger, for the shame, which thou hast found
Within my halls, shalt thou find love and honour.
The garments which thou sawest are the garments
I gave to him myself: the golden brooch
Of rare device I chose to be his jewel,
On that accursed day when he set forth
For evil Ilion, never to be named.
Ul. O honoured wife of great Laertes' son,
Waste not thy soul in weeping for thy lord!
Pen. Hath sorrow taught thee, friend, that tears are vain?
Ul. Love's tokens were not given to man for nought.
Pen. Blamest thou then a woman, if she weep
Her lord's decease?
Ul. Nay, many dames that mourn
Their lords fordone at Troy, lament unblamed.
Pen. Then why say'st thou to me, weep not; who knowest
My loss so well, knewest so well my lord?
Ul. Since thy lord lives, therefore I say weep not.
Pen. I knew that thou wouldst say Ulysses lives.
Ul. 'Tis to no purpose then I bring thee joy?

Pen. Many have falsely brought this hope before.
Ul. And yet unwittingly they spake the truth.
Ulysses lives.
Pen. Prince Æthon, if so thou be,
I came to hear thy tale, 'twas well begun:
Shew proof as fair for what thou goest to tell.
Ul. Lady, indeed Ulysses lives, and now
He is in Thesprotia, as I lately heard,
And gathers gifts and treasures as he comes:
The which I saw, a kingly wealth, enough
To dower his children's children o'er and o'er.
His brave companions all were gone, but he
From untold perils was come out unscathed.
Pen. Where learnedst thou this?
Ul. Being in Thesprotia
Not many days ago, the good king Pheidon
Told me these things, and shewed me too a ship
For voyage stored, wherein he said Ulysses
Should shortly sail; and with him I had come,
But that a vessel there discharging corn,
Left for Dulichium, and gave me passage.
Pen. Thou saw'st him not?
Ul. True, lady, I saw him not;
He had travelled to Dodona, to consult
The oracle.
Pen. Nay, and alas thou hast seen him

Scarce later than have I.

Ul. May Zeus himself
Be witness first, and then this kindly house
Of good Ulysses, whither I am come,
He shall return to thee ere this moon change.

Pen. I thank thee, sir; and wish right well thy word
Might be accomplished: I would so reward thee,
That all who looked on thee should call thee blessed.
But in my heart I know 'twill not be so;
Nor shew'st thou proof.

Ul. What of my oath?

Pen. Indeed
I doubt not thy good will, nor thy good faith;
But nought can come of it; and much I fear
That thou wilt scarce win escort from this house,
So are its masters changed.

Ul. Mean as I am,
I fear not them thou hintest; nor in thy house
Will they dare hurt me. I will here remain,
Until Ulysses comes.

Pen. O, thou knowest little.
Now is the end. I'll tell thee. When at first
These princes came to woo me against my will,
I put them off with guile; and some good spirit
Prompting my heart, I set up in the hall
A loom, and rolled upon the beam a warp

Ample and long, and said *My lordly wooers,*
Abide, nor press my marriage till this cloth
Be made, for I would weave the threads I span.
'Tis old Laertes' shroud, against the day
Which is not far, when death must take him hence.
For since my lord is dead, I would not leave
His house, without this honour paid his sire.
And stealing thus their courteous consent,
I used by day to weave, but every night
Would silently creep down, and by the loom
Setting the torches, soon unravelling all,
Undid the work of the day. Thus for three years
I wove and prospered, and the web stood still:
But in the fourth, by blabbing of my maidens
Was all discovered, and since then I have known
Reproach, nor now can longer 'scape. My friends
And parents urge me, and my son himself,
Who once was with me, begs me leave the house,
Ere his good father's wealth be all consumed.
Ul. Well done of thee! Fear not. Ulysses cometh
To slay these robbers like a flock of sheep.
Pen. Against conviction, friend, thy words are pleasant:
None yet hath thus talked with me; and ere I go
To sleep or weep upon my lonely couch,
I'll tell thee of a dream I lately dreamed,

Much of thy meaning. There were twenty geese,
Which in the courtyard I had watched with pleasure,
Raising their bills above their well-filled trough.
Now in my dream a furious eagle flew
Down from the hills, and with his crooked beak
Brake all their necks, and killed them, and they lay
Strewn in the yard; but he flew off to heaven.
Then cried I out, as in my sleep it seemed,
Aloud, and all my maidens came about me,
And mourned with me my geese the eagle had killed.
But he returned, and perching on the wall,
Spake in man's voice to me and said,
Fear not, O daughter of Icarius,
No dream thou sawest, but a vision true.
The geese are all thy wooers, and the eagle
That was, am now thy husband safe returned,
Who will slay all those men as thou hast seen.
Thus spake he, and I awaked; and looking forth
I saw my geese all standing by the trough,
Eating the wheaten meal as heretofore.

Ul. Now blessed be the gods, who thus will visit
In sleep the attentive spirits of them they love.

Pen. Two gates there are in heaven of shadowy dreams,
One pair of ivory wrought, and one of horn:
And dreams that through the ivory come to men

Are cheating, and show things that shall not be;
But such as through the polished horn fly down
Are true in issue to their glad beholders:
But thence came not my strange dream as I fear,
Welcome as 'twere to me and to my son.
Ul. The dream was true; the interpretation true.
If yet thou doubt, me too a goddess sent
To warn thee of the thing, which thou, alas,
For weariness of hope and long misgiving,
Art slow to hear.
Pen. What is man's hope, good friend?
Is't not a beggar in the land of doubt,
Seeking as thou shelter and fire and food
From day to day? and, while she finds a little,
She travels on, comforting life's affections
With scraps and crumbs fall'n from the dish of joy.
'Tis thus hope lives, patient and pleasureless:
But time will come when hope must die; she feels
The gathering cold and creeping touch of death,
And hath no thought but how to pass in peace.
Even such my hope, agèd and white as thou,
And near her term. Persist not! Rudely to arouse her
But hastens her sure end. Like in spent ashes
Which fuel chokes, what little fire remains
Burns best unmended.
Ul. Thou wouldst wrong the gods,

Who show such care for thee.

Pen. Friend, what to do?
To-morrow I had purposed—ah, evil morn!—
To end disorder, and to do a thing
Should part me from this house. I had bethought me
Of good Ulysses' bow, to bring it forth,
And make therewith a contest to the wooers;
That if among them there was one could string it,
And shoot an arrow thro' the axes' heads
Set up in line as he was used to set them,
That that man I would marry,—and with him
Quit my dear home for ever. Now thou say'st
Ulysses comes, give me thy counsel, friend,
If I should do this thing or wait awhile.

Ul. Lady, some god hath put it in thine heart:
Set thou the axes up: Bring forth the bow:
Here is there none can bend it; and maybe
That he, while they but strive with that same bow
Shall work thee full revenge for all their wrongs.

Pen. Bid'st thou me so?

Ul. Fear not! To-morrow morn
Bring forth the bow, the axes, and the arrows.

Pen. And shall I marry him who shooteth true?

Ul. Thou shalt find here no archer like thy lord.

Pen. Then will the bow be offered them in vain?

Ul. More than in vain for them, but not for thee.

Pen. Be it so. Yet would I that pure Artemis
Might give me an easy death in sleep this night,
Even now; that I no more in sorrow of heart
Should waste my life, longing for my dear lord's
Manifold excellence.
Ul. Thy constant love
Is witness that he lives. A rootless flower
Blooms not so long. Be sure that he will come.
Pen. Friend, all thy words console me: wert thou willing
I could sit here by thee, nor wish for sleep.
But 'tis full time I leave. I go to send
One to strew bedding for thee.—
Ul. Beseech thee, lady,
I'll lay me on this fleece and take my rest.
A beggar such as I needeth no more.
Pen. The god of sleep visit thee soon. Farewell.
Ul. Lady, good-night.
[*Exit Penelope. The firelight is failing.*
Now could I weep, and from the springs of pity
Forgive some wrong. Yet in the goddess' hest,
Away my softness! Surely in these things
Is her hand seen. My bow! ay, from that bow
The arrows were not wont to fly in vain.
But now to find my son, my trust in him
Hath grown with this day's doings.

Enter in the gallery above Maids whispering and tittering.

MAIDS.

See there he sits—
Hush! hush!
He talketh to the fire—
'Cause of his wandering wits.—
He! he! he! he!
What makes he here?—
He hath come over sea
With old tales of the sire.—
Why who would lend him ear?
He! he!
How could the prince give heed?—
How can our lady trust
This object of disgust?—
Or how hath she agreed
To take him here among
The wooers as her guest?
Half crazed too, I'll be bound—
He! he! he! he!
And treat him like the rest,
So noble all and young?
Hush! hush!

His old bones creak!
Hush! hush!
He looks, he turns around,
He sees us, he will speak.
Hush!

Ul. Ye miserable women, accurst of fate,
Unknowing on the eve of doom ye are come
To anger justice. Go! your wanton lovers
Are gone; ye never shall concern them more.
Nor none of them, nor ye that mock old men
Shall know what 'tis to have grey hairs. Begone!
For when Ulysses cometh, as men hang
Bunches of grapes upon a string to dry,
So shall he set you dangling in the court
By your white necks. Fly to your chambers! Fly!
Ulysses comes.

Maids. Ah, ah, ah! Mercy on us! [*Exeunt.*

Ul. Now first to find my son. If I dare call.
[*Goes to* L.
Softly—Telemachus!—Telemachus!

Tel. (*enters* L.). Father.

Ul. Speak softly, son, lest any hear.
The goddess guides us well. The plot is laid:
'Tis but to tell it thee. I have won thy mother
To confidence, tho' yet she knows me not.
To-morrow morn will she bring forth my bow,

And make therewith a contest for the wooers,
Pledging to marry him who strings the bow,
And shoots an arrow through the axes' heads.
Now thou must set them up, as I will shew thee,
In the outer court; that they who come to shoot
May stand where we are standing—as I was wont,—
Sending the arrows thro' the open doorway.
But when 'tis seen that none can string the bow,
Then I shall take it, and be that our sign.
With the first shaft I loose a foe will fall,
And war begins; and when I speak my name,
Thou and Eumæus join me; for the rest,
Soon will they fly for safety to the court:
But let its outer gate be barred; then we
Here at the doorway can at leisure aim,
Nor fear not any numbers. Learn thy part:
To bar the gate of the court on the outer side,
To close the postern, and set up the axes.
And have good care their heads sit loose upon them,
Nor bound unto the shafts; else might they serve
For arms against us. As for other weapons
They bear not many: those that here be hung
Upon the walls, must we take down and hide.
Which, if thou help me now, may soon be done.
First let me put this blazing log aside,
Lest light betray us.

Tel. Father, how shall we see
To move the arms?
Ul. Now had the goddess made me
As blind as old, I should not need to grope
In my own house: and all, I have marked it well,
Hang where I hung them there: each spear and shield
I know the touch and weight of.
Tel. None hath dared
To change a thing.
Ul. Lift off that shield.
Tel. I have it.
Ul. And that and these. Have care, son, lest the bronze
Ring and betray us.
Tel. Now the helmet, father.
Ul. Reach me those spears above,
Tel. What is that light,
That dances so and plays about the beams?
Ul. Now mayst thou see the goddess aiding us.
Tel. It shimmers like the moonlight on the sea.
Ul. 'Tis the same fierce ethereal flame of heaven,
Which makes the lightning; but the wise Athenè
Hath tamed it for her common servicings.
Stay not to look on't; 'tis to aid our work.
Tel. 'Tis certain we shall prosper.
Ul. Take thou those,

I these. Follow me up the stair. Step slow
And soft. Let nothing in thy burden shift.
Come thou.

Tel. I follow.

Ul. Stealthily, my son,

Soon shall we set them out of reach.

[*Going up the stairs.*

ACT · V

The same: ULYSSES and TELEMACHUS.

ULYSSES.

LOOK not thus sad, my son; the day hath dawned
Which ere it close shall see this house and me
Restored; for though the event seem perilous,
The goddess' oath is sure. Look not thus sad.
Arouse resolve, and brace intention up
With thoughts to whet thy courage.

TELEMACHUS.

See, dear father,
All things as thou hast ordered have I done,
And whatsoever more thou bidst me do
I shall be glad and ready: fear me not;
Nor doubt my courage, if my heart is foolish
In asking one thing of thee.

Ul. Speak, my son.

Tel. I am sad for thee, father, that thy return
Must be in battle, when thou shouldst have come
In peace and merriment: and for my mother

I grieve, that when her sorrow's cause is fled,
Her joy must break so sternly: and for these halls
I mourn, that they must know the din of arms,
And bear the stain of life-blood. But not least
For these rash men I am sorry, who I know
In part deserve to die, and yet not all:
Being for the most of common parts, no ruder
Nor worse than others are: while to the worst
Forgiveness of their wrongs would be, methinks,
Nobler revenge, and as a punishment
Heavier than death.

Ul. What wouldst thou now, my son?

Tel. Reveal thyself, and bid them at the word
Depart in shame. If then they should not fly,
There were no help for it: fight.

Ul. The manliest hearts
Are gentle; and thy speech, son, would convince
My heart of malice, were my heart my guide:
But as thou without question me obeyest,
So I the goddess, in whose hands my life
Till now hath lain.

Tel. And will there be no mercy
Shown to thy servants, who have failed in trust?

Ul. Such justice only as shall separate
The false from the innocent. If I should swerve
Even in desire from what the goddess bade,

She may desert me. Already hath my pity
Strained my obedience : yestereve I gave
Warning to fly to Lord Amphinomus ;
For which if I be blamed, what is our risk ?
At the hands of these wretches my death ; or else
Return denied me to my proper self,
Condemned to live unrecognizable,
A withered, age-stricken beggar, full of scorn.

Tel. Already I love thee, even as now thou art.

Ul. O son, this shame stifles me. Where's Eumæus?
I incline to tell him.

Tel. And there is one besides
Whom we may trust, the neatherd. When time came
To close the gate, I thought to take them with me.

Ul. Ay, do so, son ; and order with them thus.
When none of all the lords can string the bow,
I will call for it : let Eumæus bring it :
'Twill rouse disorder ; should thy mother tarry,
Make that excuse to bid her to her chamber.
When once she is gone, I shoot.

Tel. With them we are four.

Ul. Where be our arms ?

Tel. They are hid beneath the stairs.

Ul. Keep we this side the hall, so shall our foes
The sooner seek the door.

Tel. Hush ! see, they come !

Enter Eurymachus, Antinous, Ctesippus (others following).

EURYMACHUS.

Good-morrow, prince!

Tel. Good-morrow, lords.

Eur. I prithee
What mean those axes planted in the court?
They mock my judgment.

ANTINOUS.

Now I have wagered, prince,
They are set to root: the bronze is out of date;
They shall be grafted in the spring with iron.

Tel. The pleasantry is happier than the wager.
This being Apollo's feast-day, 'tis proposed
To do him honour with some archery:
The axes are for mark.

CTESIPPUS.

Here's something new:
What is't? 2300

Eur. The walls, the walls. They are bare of arms.
Why are they taken down?

Tel. Moving the axes,
'Twas found the arms, which in their place had hung
Untouched for twenty years, were much decayed

And perished by the smoke: they are set aside,
Where they can be o'erlooked and cleansed from rust.

Enter Amphinomus, the rest after him.

AMPHINOMUS (*and others*).

Good-day.

Tel. Good day.

Amph. What are these axes, prince,
Set in the court?

Tel. Since all will need to know,
Let me tell all. It being Apollo's feast,
The queen, my mother, has decreed a trial
Of shooting in his honour; and the axes
Ye ask of, are the mark. She gives the prize:
The which, with the conditions of the contest,
She shall herself proclaim. Until she comes,
Sit ye in peace.

Ctes. Tell us what prize, I pray.

Tel. Beseech you, await.

Eur. Be seated, lords, be seated!

Wooers (*sitting*). Can you explain? I am in the dark
How axes are an arrow's mark?—
—The arrows, sir, are shot point blank
Through the axes' heads set up in rank.
—And that is such a juggling feat,
That when you do it you cannot see't.

Ant. Give us some wine. Ho, fellows!

Tel. Bear the wine
To lord Antinous.

Ctes. Plague him, whoe'er he be,
That put this ox-bone in my seat. Old scoundrel,
(*To Ul.*) I think 'twas thou: if not, I owe thee favours:
Here goes a present to thee. [*Throws.*

Tel. Now, Ctesippus,
Missing thine aim thou madest a better throw
Than was thy purpose. For by heaven I swear,
That hadst thou hit the stranger, at this moment
My spear were in thy body, and the gold
Thy father saveth for thy wedding-day,
He should have spent upon thy funeral.
Know henceforth all of you, what insolence
May look to meet from me. I have been a child,
And so ye have treated me; I am now a man,
Grant it or learn it. (*To Ul.*) Old man, take thy seat.

Wooers. Now if Ulysses ne'er came back,
We not for that a lord should lack:
So doth this son of his inherit
His masterful and haughty spirit.

Amph. Silence acknowledgeth a true rebuke.
There is nought to answer, lords: treat we this stranger

With due respect. But to Telemachus
One word I speak in kindness. While hope was
Ulysses might return, he did but well
Discouraging our courtship of his mother;
But now, when hope is gone and all agree
He never can return, the prince should join
To urge the queen that she delay no more,
But wed the best man here: which were far better
Both for himself and for his father's honour,
Than all this waste and rancour in his halls.

Tel. Nay, now by Zeus, and by my father's griefs,
In no wise do I stay my mother's marriage.
Rather I urge her marry whom she will.
But while she wills not, that one word of mine
Be breathed to drive her forth, the gods forbid.
To her speak, not to me. Lo you, she is here.

Wooers. The queen! silence! the queen!

Enter Penelope (with bow). Maids follow.

PENELOPE.

My noble suitors, hear me. The prince, my son,
Hath told you of the purpose of my coming:
Howe'er that be, attend. Ye have now long time
Besieged this widowed house, and day by day
Eating and drinking without end, abused
The absence of its lord; and ever in all

Ye have still proclaimed one object, me to woo
And wed. Till now I have barred consent: to-day
I yield me to your urgence to declare
Whom I will choose: but since not willingly
I wed, I set my fortune with the gods
To guide and govern. Here is Ulysses' bow:
With this contest, I pray you, among yourselves,
And I will be the prize. Yes, his am I
Who strings most easily this bow, and shoots
The truest arrow through the axes' heads.
He is my husband and with him to day
Will I leave this fair house so dearly loved.
Eumæus, take the bow. Offer it now
In turn to all: and let all try in turn;
I will sit here and watch.

EUMÆUS.

O honoured mistress,
What wilt thou do?

NEATHERD.

Alas, my tears run down:
I never thought to have seen this day.

Ant. Now, hinds,
Obey. Why weep ye, fools? Your lady needs
Encouragement, not pity. Swift obey,

Or take your tears without, and leave the bow
To us for whom the prize is;—a prize, my lords,
Not lightly to be taken; for none I think
Will bend it as Ulysses did: none here
Is like the man, as I remember him
Long years ago, when I was but a lad.
Tel. Stay; are all here? This trial being for all,
Chance shall exclude none from it. In the house
Are ye full numbers?
Eur. Lords, let all sit down,
Each in his place.
Tel. Eumæus, go without,
And see that all be gathered in the court.
[*Exit Eumæus.*
Wooers. The queen doth well.—'Tis just and plain,
All share the chance.—It goes for nought
To have boasted favour. They that brought
The costliest gifts have spent in vain.—
Now we may laugh, sirs.—Some that sought
To overawe our equal claim
Are answered well.—I ever thought
She was a wise and honest dame. [*They sit.*
Eur. The places all are filled: none lacketh here.
Eum. (*returning*). All are assembled, prince, within the court.
Tel. Come forth in turn then, and assay the bow.

I think Zeus robs me of my wits.—I laugh:
'Tis true I laugh.—Ye understand, my lords,
My wise and honoured mother hath declared
That she will wed a stranger, and go forth
And leave this house:—and I laugh and am glad!
Come then, I say; seeing this is the prize,
A lady without rival in the land;
What say I? Not in all the Achæan lands,
In sacred Pylos, Argos, or Mycenæ,
Or elsewhere. But ye know this, and indeed
Why should I praise my mother? Come, I call you;
Come forth, assay the bow. Who cometh first?
Why, now I see I am a fool; myself,
Why not myself? If I should string it best,
And easiest, and shoot truest at the mark,
Then I reserve the prize: my lady mother
Will never quit these halls. Yes, and I think
I have some phantom of my father's strength.—

Eur. Nay, prince, this was not bargained.

Ant. Let him try.

Tel. It bends, it yields; but what you say is just;
'Tis not for me. Ye be the mighty men:
I hand it you.

Eur. Rise each in turn,
As the wine circles. First is Sir Leiodes,
The soothsayer.

LEIODES.

Give it me.

Eum. Sir, mayst thou fail.

Leiod. Curse on thy tongue. I asked not thy goodwill.

Tel. (*aside to Eum.*). I need thy aid without: thou and the neatherd
Follow me thro' the postern: let none see you.

Some wooers rise from their seats. Tel., Eum., and neatherd go out by the postern door R.

Leiod. I cannot bend it: 'tis a deadly bow.
Ay, if I ever have spoken sooth, to-day
My spirit is true. This is no marrying bow.
'Twill prove our shame and death. Another take it.
I have done with it. We have all along been fooled;
Now more than ever. But if any yet
Hope for the lady, let him try the bow,
And then go woo another.

Ant. Think not, sir,
Because thy hands are white and delicate,
There be no men of sinew.

Eur. Peace, my lords!

A suitor. 'Tis stiff and dry with age. Bring me some oil:
If it be rubbed therewith and warmed the while,
'Twill ease it mightily.

Ant. Ay, do ye so.

[*They take it to the fire.*

CHORUS—*Wooers* (*inter se*).

What was it, friend, I heard thee say?—
Seest thou the arms, that in the hall
Were wont to hang, are gone to-day?—
Ay, so they be, sir, one and all.—
Mark you this dust beneath the wall?—
Well, sir, what of it?—hark, 'tis said
That, as Eumæus took last night
The axes from their rank o'erhead,
He saw a strange and fearful sight;
For all the arms, which never yet
Had been disturbed where they were set
By good Ulysses years ago,
Crumbled before his eyes; and lo!
Spear, helm, and shield, without a sound,
Fell down in dust upon the ground.—
That was an omen.—True, and we
The accomplishment to-day shall see.—
Ulysses' reign is past and fled:—
Ay, and his spirit here hath been
To do this thing, knowing the queen
Should to another man be wed.

The suitor (*2nd competitor*). I cannot bend it.

3rd. Go to, sir, give it me.

Thou heldst it wrongly,—but thus.—
2nd. Ay, teach me, shew me!
3rd. Ah! ah! ah! Nay, indeed it yieldeth not.
What is it made of? Were't of Indian horn
I must have broke it. Bah! I have wrenched my back!
Eur. Sirs, 'tis my turn. Ye do us little honour.
'Tis warm to the hand, and well hath drunk the oil.
Now be I first to string it.
Wooers. See!
See he will do it if any can.—
He is the best, and so 'twill be.—
He standeth firm: it yieldeth now.—
Well done! Eurymachus will win.—
See how his striving body strains!—
Fixed like the image of a man
In stone he stands.—Now for it!—The veins
Stand out upon his darkening brow.—
It slowly yields.—He doth it.—Nay,
It slippeth back.—He giveth in.—
He hath failed, he putteth it away.
Eur. My friends, I am hurt both for myself and all.
And were there but this woman in the world,
To miss her could but vex me as it doth.
But others be there, and my grief is other.
For that we came in strength so far behind
The great Ulysses, that we could not string

His bow, will ring our shame in ears unborn.
Ant. That will not be, Eurymachus,—and thou know'st it.
This is Apollo's feast, and on such day
Who should presume in archery? Sit down;
And let the bow and other gear abide.
Meanwhile pour out libations to the god,
And make a sacrifice. To-morrow morn,
Be he appeased, we may with his good favour
Find better fortune.
Eur. 'Tis well spoke, my lords.
Consent ye all?
Wooers. Ay, ay.
Eur. Then be it so.
What saith our honoured lady?
Pen. Well, my lords,
'Tis an untoward ending. Shall I think
Ye will not, or ye cannot?
Eur. Be content
To wait but till to-morrow, we beseech thee.—
Bring round the wine.
Tel. (*who has entered unperceived with Eum. and neatherd*). Ho! men, take round the wine.
Eum. Will they not need it?
Ant. Thou impertinent swineherd,
Go to thy pigs.

Eum. Ay, ay, my lord.
Ul. Hear me,
Ye warriors, wooers of Ulysses' queen,
And you, Antinous and Eurymachus
In chief! 'Tis well ye urge to stay the contest,
And pour libations, that the archer god
To-morrow may grant strength to whom he will.
But first give me the bow, that I may gauge
My strength with yours, to see if yet remains
Some muscle lithe of what once clothed my limbs,
Or if 'tis withered all with age and want.
Wooers. Ho! ho! The beggar thinks that he
Shall win the fair Penelope.
Ant. Thou wretched fool, thou hast even less wit than hairs:
Art not content in our high company
To sit at ease, and have thy share, and hear
Our talk, and see our pleasure 'gainst our will?
The unwonted wine dilates what brains thou hast,
To make thee think thou canst contend with us.
Pen. Antinous, I forbid this disrespect
Before me of my guest: and by my life
Thou dost him wrong. To me he seems as tall
And strongly built as thou; he boasts to be
No less well born:—I grant him place and speech.
Thinkest thou if he string Ulysses' bow

That I should wed him?—Nay, nor he thinks that.
Fret not yourselves, beseech you, with such fears.
Eur. Far be the thought, O wise Penelope:
And since he hath nought to gain, let him not try it:
Lest if he string it, men should say hereafter,
Naming our names, *The great bow of Ulysses*
These could not handle, but a beggar strung it.
Pen. Look ye to future times for fair renown?
That hath been forfeit long. Stick not at this.
Give him the bow; he too shall have his prize.
A king's son is he: ay, and like a king
From this house shall he issue clad and armed
From head to foot, as are the best of you.
I say, give him the bow.
Tel. Mother, the bow is mine:
To give it or withhold it is my right,
And mine alone, which none can gainsay here.
And choose I now to give it to this beggar,
'Tis his to bear away for good and all.
And what I will, that shall I do. To me
Therefore leave this dispute: to-day the trial,
Thou seest, is closed. Retire thou to thy chamber,
And there at loom and distaff set thy maids their tasks.
But this, which looks not like to be a lady's matter,
Is mine, for mine is lordship in this house.

Pen. Well, son, then I shall go. Follow me, maids.
[*Exit Pen. and maids.*

CHOR. *Wooers.* What hath come o'er the prince? and why
Bids he his royal mother hence:
Pushing his haughty speech so high
In strange, undutiful offence?

Ul. Bring me the bow that I may try my skill.

Wooers (to Eumæus). Stay! man, stay!—Whither wilt thou go,
Bearing the great resistless bow?
Stay. We will slay thee if thou dare!—
Forbear! Forbear!—

Tel. Standest thou! servest thou so many masters? On man, and give it him: say thee nay who dares.

Wooers. Ha! ha! he knows not what to do:
Now he will go, and now he stands.—
Go, give it in the beggar's hands.—
Ay, let him have it and welcome too.—
And thee, old man, may Fortune bless,
As thou therewith shalt find success.

Eum. (*giving to Ul.*). Master, O master! . . .

Ul. (*aside*). Silence.—Now may Apollo Grant me but half the strength that once was mine, And ye shall see if I can bend a bow.

Wooers. By heaven, the beggar hath an eye.—

He holds it as he knew the trick.—
Perchance he hath the like laid by
At home.—Or 'tis his thought to try
To fashion such another stick.—
He bends it at his will.—'Tis done!—
'Tis done!—He hath strung it.—See 'tis done.

Ul. Behold, prince, if I have not been wrongly scorned.
Give me the arrows. Now they have seen my strength,
These lords belike would have me prove my skill.

Wooers. Now will he shoot? The villains bring
The arrows.—Ay, he taketh one,
To set it on the string.

Ul. Now is the irresoluble contest o'er:
Though what remains to do be not child's play.
But I will hit a mark ye little think of.
Apollo aid me! [*Shoots Antinous.*

Wooers. Ah! Ah! Beware, beware!

Ant. (*falling back*). Ah!

Wooers. Oh, madman! madman! Seize him!

Eur. Man, what dost thou?

Amph. What hast thou done? Thou'st slain a man.

Ctes. O villain!

Wooers. He's dead. Antinous is slain.

Other wooers (*appearing at door*). The lord Antinous is slain.

Eur. Foolhardy wretch, this murder is thy death.
Whether unwittingly, or wittingly,
It matters not: thou hast slain the noblest prince
Of the isle; and swiftly shall he be avenged.
Ul. (*leaping up to where Penelope had sat. Tel., Eum., and neatherd join him*). Dogs! ye that said I never should return
From Trojan soil: ye that would waste my house,
And woo my wife while yet I was alive:
Nor feared the gods in heav'n, nor shame of men:
Now are the bonds of death made fast upon you.
I am Ulysses.
Wooers. Ah, think you!—think you!
Others without. See! see!
Eur. Stay, sir, awhile!
Wooers. Fly! fly!—'Tis he!
'Tis he, fly! See the prince, and there
His two men—Speak, sir! speak him fair—
Eur. Stay, sir, awhile, I pray thee. If thou indeed
Art he, the good Ulysses safe returned,
As by thy deeds and words thou makest to be,
Thou wilt hear reason, as thy speech is just.
'Tis true ill hath been done thee in house and field:
But he lies dead, who was the chief in blame;
We may rejoice, for he brought all about,
Antinous, less eager for the marriage

Or dower, than in ambitious hope, now quenched,
That he should reign in Ithaca :—to which end
He would have killed the prince. But, he being dead,
Spare thou thy folk, sir, spare thine own ; and we
For all wrong done thee will repay in full,
Each one in answer for waste hitherto,
Bringing the worth of twenty oxen, ay,
And bronze and iron in plenty, till thy heart
Be well appeased, that now is justly stirred.

Ul. O nay: not though thou gavest me all thy wealth,
What now thou hast, or after shouldst inherit,
Could that be thine atonement ; nor the like
Of each for each, that I should stay my hands
From slaying here the wooers of my wife.
This choice ye have, to fight or fly ; but flying
Or fighting I shall slay you with these arrows.

Wooers (without). 'Tis he : he shooteth : fly.

Wooers (within). Wrath of the gods, 'tis he.
To arms !—Nay, fly.—O fly.—
[*Many begin to escape.*

Ul. I am come late indeed, but in good time.

Amph. Out, sirs, haste thro' the doors :
To-morrow it may be
He may be appeased ; now fly.
Avoid his anger now. [*They fly.*

Eur. Fight. We shall overwhelm them. Follow me !

Ctes. Fly while we may, I say. [*Exit.*

Eur. Who is with me?

Eum. Come, lord Eurymachus; and I will kill thee,
Even as a pig.

Eur. Death to thee, hind. Now charge!

Some wooers. Charge all together. Down!

Tel. Now, robbers, die.

Eur. Ah! ah! I am slain. [*Falls dead.*

The others. Fly, fly, fly, fly. [*Exeunt.*

Tel. They are caught.

[*Cries without.*

Ul. While I stand here and shoot, fetch forth the arms. [*Shoots.*

Wooers (*without*). To the gate; to the gate. Ulysses is returned.
Fly, fly! Throw wide the gate. The gate, the gate!

Eum. Master, 'tis thou indeed: and I not know thee!

Ul. Serve me but now, as when thou knew'st me not. [*Shoots. Cries.*

Tel. See here thy shield, my father, and the spears.

Ul. Now forth with me and fear not, for the goddess
Is with us. We will stand upon the threshold,
And from that vantage fight. Be we hard pressed,
Retire within, and bar the door. Now forth!

[*Exeunt Ul., Tel., Eum., and neatherd in fighting order. The doors close behind them.*

Re-enter Penelope and maids.

Maids (*entering down the stairs*).

They are gone: they are gone without. The hall is still.

Pen. Hark! hark! They fight without. Telemachus, Telemachus, my son! Ah! evil day!
The bow, the bow. And corpses in the hall.

1st Maid. Woe, woe: see 'tis the lord Eurymachus, Slain by a spear.

2nd Maid. Another by the wall.
Beauteous Antinous. Alas, alas!

Pen. Hark how they shout. Alas, my son, my son!
They slay him in the court. His haughty spirit
Proudly rebuking them hath done it. I hear
His speech that taunts them still.

2nd Maid. Shall I look forth?

1st. Ay, to the door and spy—Softly one wing
Draw back and spy between. (*Here the door is opened by Maid* 2.) Ah me, the noise,
And din of arms.

2nd. Lady, the prince is safe.

Pen. What seest thou? tell me.

2nd. O, but see thyself
The deadly fight.

Pen. I dare not look upon it.
Who fights 'gainst whom?

2nd. The beggar on the stair
Deals death around, and by him stand the prince,
The neatherd, and Eumæus. Ah! he is struck!
Nay, nay. They keep all off with spear and shield.
[*Cries without.*

Pen. Alas, the shrieks of death. I faint, ho! help me.
Lead me to the chair. [*Sits down.*

1st. They may burst in: beseech thee,
Back to thy chamber!

Pen. Nay, if my son be safe.
Watch there, and tell me.—Is he yet unhurt?

2nd. They spring upon the beggar and the prince,
And as they spring, they are slain.—They lie in heaps.

Pen. Alas! what cries! Say, is the prince still safe?

2nd. He shieldeth himself well, and striketh surely.
His foes fall dead before him. Ah! now what see I?
Who cometh? Lo! a dazzling helm, a spear
Of silver or electron; sharp and swift
The piercings. How they fall. Ha, shields are raised
In vain. I am blinded, or the beggar-man
Hath waxed in strength. He is changed, he is young.
O strange!
He is all in golden armour. These are gods,
That slay the wooers. (*Runs to Pen.*) O lady, forgive me!
'Tis Ares' self. I saw his crispèd beard:
I saw beneath his helm his curling locks.

None will escape. O lady, save me, save me. [*Kneels.*

Maids all. Let them not slay us. Lady! lady! forgive us!

Pen. Why kneelest thou to me? Fools, why to me?
I have nothing to forgive you. There is no wrong
'Twixt me and you: Or if the gods should punish,
Can I protect?

Maids. Forgive us, queen, forgive us!

Pen. I see ye are dazed—no wonder.—The thing is true
Ye say. The gods are come. I know it: I spake
With one myself unweeting: and he bade
Confront those robbers with the bow of death.
That hath provoked our fate. Ah, cursèd day
The Greeks set forth for Troy. Accurst was Helen,
Accurst was Menelaus, Agamemnon
Accurst, who o'er us drew a net of ill:
Whence since is no escape, no not for one.
Not Ilion burned, not Greece made bare of men,
Not ten years' war, nor to their widowed homes
The barred return of heroes could suffice
To fill the cup of evil, which the gods,
Dooming one deed of all the deeds of men,
The folly of one woman and one man,
Have heaped upon us. Now the unending slaughter
Falls on this house. Was joy, or woe, my crime?

To have had, or lost the best of all the Greeks?
My patience, watching twenty years, or now
To have yielded but a little? O ye high gods,
Smite all ill-doers; ay, smite me with death,
Triumphant Ares, if within my body,
My lord being dead, there is either hope or love
That may be callèd life. I would not live,
I have no cause to live: but O my son—
Spare him!

2nd Maid. O lady, 'tis not him, but us
Ares will slay.

Pen. Look, look again.

2nd. I fear.
'Tis now more dread than ever. The cries have ceased.

Pen. Hush, hark—ay, all is still. Look forth, I say.

Re-enter Tel., Eum., and neatherd.

My son, my son, thou livest.

Tel. Thou art here! thou knowest?

Pen. What means this fight? what hath been done?

Tel. Thou knowest not?
The robbers are all slain.

Pen. All slain!

Tel. My father

Is here.

Pen. Son, son!

Tel. He hath returned—'Tis true—
And in his vengeance slain them all.

Pen. What say'st thou?

Tel. Mother, believe: our sorrow is o'er. 'Tis he,
The man disguised, who spake with thee last night:
But now himself.

Eum. O lady, 'tis the master,
Just as he was.

Tel. The tidings hath o'ercome her.
Stand from before her.

Re-enter Ulysses, as himself.

Ul. Now o'er my threshold step I as myself,
None will gainsay my coming. Ah here, my son!

Tel. She learned her joy too quickly. As I spake
She fell back swooning.

Ul. Watch by her awhile.
(*To Eum. and neatherd.*) Drag ye these bodies forth,
and hide the blood;
That there be nought to shock her wakening sense.
And all ye maids begone. I know to winnow
Good wheat from chaff: and what I spake to you
Shall be to-day accomplished. (*Exeunt Maids.*) Ha,
what see I?

Beneath yon skins a coward skulks—one more—
Traitor, come forth!

Phem. (*appearing from under skins*). O my good lord and master,
Have pity upon me.

Ul. (*to Eum.*). Take him to the court,
And slay him there.

Phem. Master, have pity on me:
I am but a minstrel, and have done no wrong.

Tel. Father, I plead for him: 'tis Phemius.
Spare him.

Ul. Well, be thou spared;—the only one—
And live to tell the tale. See, 'tis thy trade.
Go from the hall. [*Exeunt Phemius and neatherd.*
(*To Tel.*) Now all is ready, son: 2760
Doth she not wake?

Tel. Ay, now I think she awakes.

Ul. Stand thou in sight. Now, dearest wife, awake!
Wife, wife, awake! That word and in my voice
Should call thee from the grave. Dost thou not hear?

Pen. Who spake?

Ul. I speak to thee again.

Pen. Thy hand.

Ul. I hold thee, and thou me. 'Tis I. I kiss thee.

Pen. 'Tis thou. Let it be waking life, or death,
Or dream, I see thee.—
Ul. Truest and bravest heart, our patient years
Are crowned with joy.
Pen. O love, thou comest in time.

Athena appears on the threshold.

ATHENA.

My work is done. But ere I leave the haunts
Of sorrowing and rejoicing men, I look
To bless my work. O wise son of Laertes,
Thou hast thy house and wife and self restored.
Murder, strife, robbery, the wrongs I hate,
Revellings and insolence are now avenged.
Yet not less am I foe to faithlessness,
Breaches of trust and of those modest laws,
Which guard high thoughts and heavenly purity.
Thy wicked servants slay; which done, make soon
Purification of thy house defiled:
And not forget the oracle, which said
That thou shouldst find one journey more to make;
This thy atonement: and since justice holds
The crown for good deeds, as the sword for ill,
Grudge not this only absence: thy good servant
Thou wouldst reward; he is a prince; restore him

Unto his kingdom: 'tis the will of Zeus.
He that hath servèd well hath earned to reign.
Son of Laertes, wilt thou do this thing?
Ul. Yea, goddess, I will do it. Thy will is mine.
Eum. (*kneeling*). Most honoured of all masters!
Ath. Then FARE YE WELL.

NOTES

PALICIO

I

THE fragment of Æschylus on the title (see List of previous Editions) suggests a truly ancient origin for the family of Palicio: its known history is given in the *Nobiliario viceregio capitaniale e pretoriano in Palermo nobile. Parte terza degli annali di Agostino Inveges. Palermo. MDCLI. p.* 104. *PALIZZI.* Hugo, Squarcialupu and some of the others may be found in Sicilian histories about the year 1500, the supposed date of this play: their characters and the political situation are quasi-historical. The incidents connecting Margaret and Palicio are mostly adapted from a bad French story by *De Stendhal*, called *Vanina Vanini*, in a book titled *Chroniques Italiennes*, published by *Michel Levy*, in 1855.

1883.

II

Since the publication of PALICIO, unexpected light has been thrown on the married history of *Palicio* and *Margaret*. It would seem that they had a son, who was probably named after his maternal uncle, the chief Justiciary: for in March 1891 a half-witted Sicilian, named *Manuel Palizzi*, or *Palicio*, was

among the Italians who were executed by the mob in *New Orleans*, for being concerned in the murder of the head of the police. Though the mental condition of this unfortunate fellow was such as to make his responsibility questionable, yet his connection with the *Mafia* society, and with their motives and crimes, points, as unmistakably as his name, to his ancestor in my play, terribly degraded though he was in body as in mind. It is possible that some of our fanatical anarchists may be similarly the prey of a depraved atavism, and be impelled by a fermentation of the sour dregs of an old puritanic heroism. I hope that the family is now extinct. The late *Professor Freeman* in the introduction to his *History of Sicily*, contributed to the literature of my play, by giving a careful and full account of what I assumed to be the origin of the family name.

1894.

THE RETURN OF ULYSSES

This play, being a dramatising of the chief scenes in Homer's *Odyssey*, and not a recast of the story in dramatic form, is as a stage-play open to evident objections; to which, if it be not successful, there can be no answer. How closely Homer has been followed need not be pointed out, as translations of

the *Odyssey* are common, and the recent accurate version by *Mr. Lang* is in every one's reach. Reference to that will measure the author's fidelity, and show where he has altered, where added; and it may also excuse him from any acknowledgment of obligation to his friend, beyond the general confession that he has borrowed from his book whenever it suited him to do so.

It was necessary for the play to make the hall of Ulysses' house different from its description in the *Odyssey*; and considering the disagreement of critics as to Homer's meaning, this was a matter of less regret. The hall required for the last three acts has the following necessary parts. Of the three walls the back wall has, running along it at a convenient height, a practicable *gallery*, which communicates at either end with the upper rooms. This gallery joins in the left corner a short *staircase* against the left wall, leading down to the hall, not so far as to the floor, but ending on a daïs-like *platform*, which is raised two or three feet above the rest of the floor. This is the elevation on which Penelope sits to receive the gifts, and on to which Ulysses leaps when he makes himself known. It has steps also down from it to the floor of the hall. The gallery spoken of is supported by pillars, behind which a

bench for the suitors runs along the wall; and this arrangement may follow round what is seen of the right wall of the room. But the centre of the back wall is broken by the *doorway* which leads into the outer court: its threshold is three steps above the floor of the hall; it has double folding-doors, through which, if they are open, the *outer court* may be seen; and this outer court is on a higher level than the inner hall. The *postern gate* is in the right back corner. The *fireplace* is at the right front.

With this skeleton given, the text is clearly descriptive of all the disposition; but there is one stage direction it may be well to add: that is, that the *chair*, in which Penelope sits on the daïs to watch the contest with the bow, is thrown down on the floor of the hall in the fighting when Eurymachus is killed; and is set up for her there in the centre of the stage by one of the maids for the last scenes.

1884.

P.S. The translation of the *Odyssey* referred to above is the joint work of Mr. S. H. Butcher, Fellow and Praelector of University College, Oxford, and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and of Mr. A. Lang, late Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. Published by Macmillan and Co.

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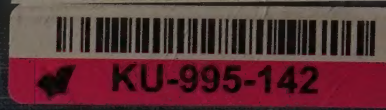
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